

### Adult and continuing education in Cyprus

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**Länderporträt**

**Maria Gravani | Alexandra Ioannidou**

# **Adult and Continuing Education in Cyprus**

**Open Access**



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## Content

<b>Preliminary Notes .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
General information .....	7
Economic and Social Situation .....	8
Education, Research and Development.....	9
The Education System – Overview .....	10
Overview over Adult Education in Cyprus .....	13
<b>2. Historical Development .....</b>	<b>15</b>
General Conditions for Adult Education .....	15
Facts in the 20th Century’s Chronology .....	16
<b>3. Political and Legal Framework.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Political Framework .....	18
Legal Framework .....	21
<b>4. Financing Adult Education.....</b>	<b>23</b>
General information .....	23
Consequences of the financial and economic crisis .....	25
<b>5. Educational Institutions.....</b>	<b>29</b>
Formal adult education .....	29
Non-formal adult education .....	31
Vocational training .....	34
<b>6. Provision .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>7. Participation .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>8. Staff and Professionalism .....</b>	<b>48</b>
The professional profile of adult educators.....	51
<b>9. Research and Higher Education .....</b>	<b>52</b>
Academic studies .....	52
Research.....	53
<b>10. International Framework .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Useful Addresses .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Universities .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Literature .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Internet Sources.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Tables and Figures .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Authors .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>65</b>



## Preliminary Notes

The interconnectedness of adult education, learning and its socio-political environment (persons and organisations, aims and educational concepts, as well as the labor market) is closer than that of universities and schools. Political, social, economic and cultural aspects of the particular national environment not only provide the general framework for adult education and learning, but are also under their influence.

There are various reasons for that. First of all, adult education became an integral part of people's lives. Learning is considered a lifelong process in which knowledge, new competencies, skills and behavioral patterns are acquired. In addition, learning occurs not only on an individual level, but all economic development as well as democratic participation of the individual requires formal and informal learning.

Hence, the appearance of adult education and learning can be quite interlaced, confusing and complex. It varies from presentations, weekend seminars, courses of longer duration up to long-term vocational training. It occurs in companies, in educational organizations, at home, in cultural institutions and in the media. It is subject to different political and legal contexts. Sometimes, adult education is financed by official or state funds, sometimes by project resources; increasingly it is structured by the market.

The various "systems" of adult education that are embedded in national and regional traditions are hard to compare with each other. This becomes obvious when supra-regional and transnational projects with common interests and experiences are aspired. The European Union is an excellent example for a process in which such differences become more and more visible.

Stakeholders in research, practice and politics of adult education are more and more confronted with the necessity to communicate and cooperate with partners in other nations on a professional level. Here, content, funding, reputation and interests become relevant. Cooperation and communication may be inefficient when the knowledge about conditions and structures in other European regions is insufficient. Especially when it is about details in cooperative structures, a lack of knowledge can turn into a problem.

If you want to cooperate with European partners, an overview about the situation of adult education and adult learning in other countries can be very helpful, since it puts partial information into context. This can be the base for further exploration.

The German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning continues its established series of reports on adult education in other European countries with this volume on "Adult and Continuing Education in Cyprus". Volumes on Austria, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Spain and Switzerland have been published in the last ten years. This loose series shall be continued. All volumes about non-German speaking countries will be published in English and Open Access. Readers who prefer traditional books may order a print version for a small amount from W. Bertelsmann Verlag.

The series “Länderporträt” of the DIE provides a beneficial base for the European adult education politics and one’s individual practice in continuing education.

*Josef Schrader*

German Institute for Adult Education –  
Leibniz-Centre for lifelong learning

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*Maria Gravani*

Alexandra Ioannidou

# 1. Introduction

## General information

Cyprus is the largest island in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea and the third largest in the Mediterranean Sea, after Sicily and Sardinia, with a total area of 9.251 square kilometers. It has long been a crossing point between Europe, Asia and Africa and influences from all three geo-political regions are particularly discernible in all aspects of cultural and everyday life. The Republic of Cyprus gained its independence from Britain in 1960 following a four-year armed liberation struggle against British colonial rule. According to the founding agreements three countries – Greece, Turkey and Britain – became the guarantors of the new state. Three years later, inter-communal violence between Turkish and Greek Cypriots broke out. Since 1974 the island is de facto divided after a coup d'état supported by the military junta in Greece against the Cypriot President Makarios and the subsequent intervention of the Turkish army. Since 1974, 37 percent of the island is under Turkish military occupation. Despite numerous efforts to reunify the country, it remains divided to this day and its capital city, Nicosia, is the last divided city in Europe. Although the northern part of the island is still under Turkish occupation, the Republic of Cyprus is internationally recognized as the sole legitimate state on the island. In 2004 Cyprus entered the European Union and in 2008 the Eurozone.

According to the 2011 Census, Cyprus has 840,407 inhabitants in the government controlled area, of which 638,124 were born in Cyprus, 106,561 in other EU countries and 90,405 in non-EU countries. There was an increase of 2.6 percent in 2011, compared to the previous year, mainly explained by the net migration balance and to a lesser extent by the natural increase. Net migration (number) was estimated at +18,142 in 2011, as compared to +8,128 in 2005 and +3,960 in 2000. The total fertility rate indicates an overall declining trend for the last three decades and it was estimated at 1.35 in 2011.

The age pyramid in 2011 was as follows:

- 0–14 years: 16.1%
- 15–44 years: 46.1%
- 45–64 years: 24.5%
- 64+ years: 13.3%



Life expectancy at birth indicates an increasing trend, estimated at 79.0 for men and 82.9 for women for the period 2010–2011. The urban/rural share of the total population was 67.4 percent urban and 32.6 percent rural in 2011.

As provided in the Constitution, Cyprus has a presidential system of government. Each community, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot, is responsible for its educational and linguistic matters and Greek and Turkish are the official languages of the Republic of Cyprus, used in legislation and the public administration.

## Economic and Social Situation

Since the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union, in May 2004, the island's economic system has undergone significant reforms. Cyprus indicated strong growth in the first decade of the millennium, twice that of the euro area. The recent global economic recession and the extended exposure of the Cypriot banks to the Greek economy have significantly impacted on the Cyprus economy. Nowadays, Cyprus is increasingly faced with serious challenges in terms of unsustainable external and internal macroeconomic imbalances. As a consequence, Cypriot authorities agreed an Economic Assistance Programme with the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund on 2 April 2013. The Programme covers the period 2013–2016 and provides a financial package of 10 billion. The key elements of the Programme were detailed in a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Commission and the Republic of Cyprus.

The growth rate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in real terms during the second quarter of 2013 was negative and estimated at -5.9 percent over the corresponding quarter of 2012. Negative growth rates were recorded by the secondary sector of the economy (Construction, Manufacturing) as well as in the island's main economic sectors of Tourism, Banking, Trade, Transport and other Services.<sup>1</sup>

According to the results of the Labour Force Survey for the 2nd quarter of 2013, the employment rate for persons aged 20 to 64 was 67 percent (males 73% and females 62%), recording a decrease from the corresponding quarter of 2012, 70.7 percent (males 76.8% and females 65.2%). The unemployment rate became double as high as 2011 and amounted to 15.5 percent of the labor force (males 16.2% and females 14.6%), recording an increase from the corresponding quarter of 2012, 11.3 percent (males 12% and females 10.4%). The corresponding rate for the second quarter of 2011 was 7.2 percent (7.5% for males and 7.0% for females) (see table 1).

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1 CYSTAT (2013): Latest Figures: GDP Growth Rate, 2nd Quarter 2013. URL: [www.moec.gov.cy/aethee/omadiki\\_mathisi/ioannis\\_zenios\\_human\\_resource\\_development\\_authority\\_cyprus.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.cy/aethee/omadiki_mathisi/ioannis_zenios_human_resource_development_authority_cyprus.pdf)

	Unemployment rate
2nd quarter 2013	15.5%
2nd quarter 2012	11.3%
2nd quarter 2011	7.2%

Table 1: Unemployment rate for persons aged 20 to 64 (Source: Labour Force Survey)

The unemployment rate for young persons aged 15 to 24 skyrocketed to 40.3 percent of the labour force of the same age group recording an increase from the corresponding quarter of 2012, 26 percent. Compared to August 2012, there is an increase in the unemployment rates of 43 percent, especially in Retail, Education, Banking and Financing, Construction and Manufacturing (see CYSTAT, August 2013).

## Education, Research and Development

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP is quite above the EU average: 7.8 in 2011, compared to 8.0 in 2010, 7.0 in 2005 and 5.6 in 2000. According to the annual report “Statistics of Education”<sup>2</sup> for the school year 2010/11 there were 1.268 educational institutions, 178.853 pupils/students and 16.545 teachers at all levels of education. The enrolments of pupils/students by level of education were as indicated in table 2.

Level of education	Enrolment of pupils/students
pre-school and pre-primary education	25,582
primary education	54,083
secondary education	63,764
tertiary education	32,118
special education	306

Table 2: Enrolments of pupils/students by level of education in 2010/11 (Source: Statistics of Education)

The main fields of study in Tertiary Education were: Business and Administration (12.7%), Health (11.8%), Engineering and Engineering Trades (8.8%), Social and

<sup>2</sup> This report presents the results of the annual survey on education (Statistics on education 2010–2011, Statistical Service, November 2012). It covers all educational institutions in the Government controlled areas, which are registered at the Ministry of Education and Culture, as well as Cypriot students abroad. The reference date for school statistics is the 8th of October 2010 and for Cypriot students abroad the academic year 2010/11, for the financial statistics of education the calendar year 2010 except for school committees and parents associations where data refer to school year 2010/2011.

Behavioral Sciences (8.6%), Architecture and Building (7.7%), Arts (7.3%) and Law (7.1%), Humanities (7.0%), and Teacher Training and Education Science with 6.2 percent.

Public expenditure in public and private education for year 2010 stood at €1,390.9 mn, for all levels. The current public cost per pupil/student in public schools by level of education was as follows: Pre-school and Pre-primary €5,565, Primary €6,015, Secondary €9,519 and Tertiary €14,441.

## The Education System – Overview

The education system in Cyprus<sup>3</sup> is based on the fundamental principle that every person has the right to receive and every person or institution has the right to give education or instruction. Policies and actions in education are in line with the principle of equal opportunities for all. There is a strong cultural trend in Cyprus in favor of general secondary education followed by higher education. Education has a very high status amongst Cypriot society, and families encourage and support young people to achieve higher education. There is a very high demand for higher education in Cyprus. 95 percent of children in the 15 to 18 age groups are enrolled in upper secondary education, whereas 82 percent of the students completing upper secondary education seek placement at a higher education institution. It is worth mentioning that Cyprus has already achieved the EU goal of at least 40 percent of the 30 to 34-year-olds completing third level education set by the EU 2020 strategy.<sup>4</sup>

Education governance is mainly centralized. The main authorities responsible for education are the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Educational Service Commission and the Local School Boards. The Council of Ministers is the highest authority for educational policy making, while overall responsibility for education rests with the Ministry of Education and Culture (except for the case of five public, non-university level institutions of higher education which come under the remit of other ministries). The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the administration of education, the enforcement of educational laws and the implementation of educational policy, the preparation of the education budget and educational bills and the construction of school buildings. Curricula, syllabuses and textbooks are set by the Ministry.

The Educational Service Commission is a five-member body appointed by the President of the Republic for a six-year period. It is responsible for appointments, secondments, transfers, promotions, and discipline (including dismissal) of teachers and school inspectors.

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3 Relevant information is taken from URL: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Cyprus:Overview>

4 Taking into account also Cypriot students who study abroad.

Local School Boards are responsible for the maintenance and equipment of the school buildings in collaboration with the Department of Technical Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Cyprus is divided into six administrative districts: Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, Ammochostos, Paphos and Kyrenia. District authorities have no responsibility either in policy-making in education, educational planning or the establishment and operation of schools. Schools at all levels of education and in all the six districts of Cyprus are established by the Ministry of Education upon decisions by the Council of Ministers.

Education in Cyprus is available from pre-primary to postgraduate levels (see fig. 1). Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education is compulsory until the age of 15. In upper secondary education, students can choose between the unified lyceum and technical schools. Tertiary education is provided at three public and four private universities. At post-secondary non-tertiary level operate several private colleges and institutions.

After its accession to the EU, Cyprus has increased investment in human capital and strengthened its efforts in developing an adequate Adult Education System and an effective Vocational Education and Training System, ensuring the delivery of necessary knowledge, skills and competences to the Cypriot population in order to adapt to a culture of lifelong learning. In spite of recent efforts, central planning in the area of lifelong learning has not been extensively developed yet.

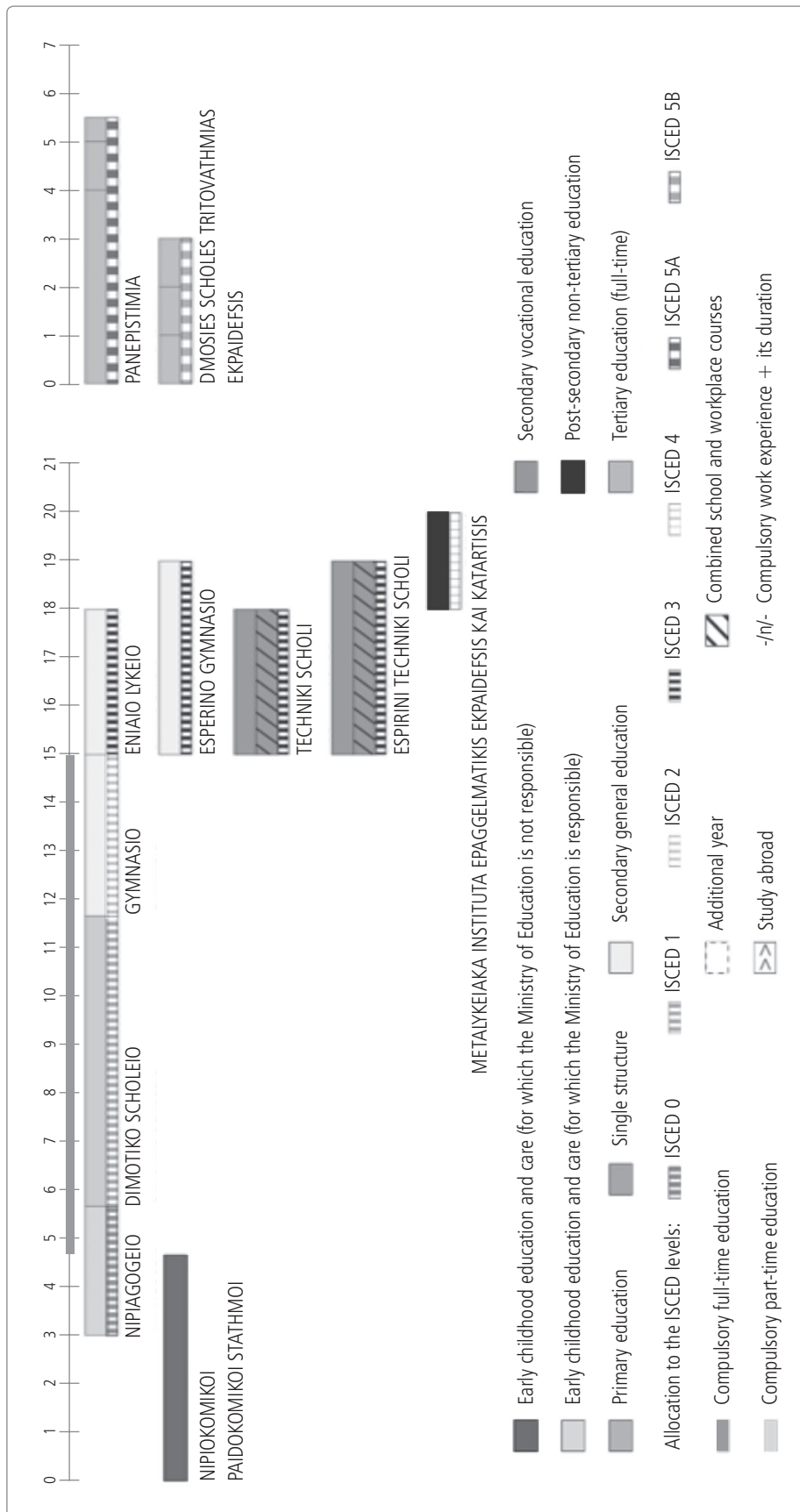


Figure 1: Structure of the national education system 2012/13 (Source: Eurydice, URL: [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/File:Diagram\\_key\\_EN.png](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/File:Diagram_key_EN.png))

## Overview over Adult Education in Cyprus

The Ministry of Education and Culture declared its intention to restructure the educational systems by means of a Lifelong Learning Strategy and a National Strategic Development Plan 2007–2013. Nevertheless, researchers lack insight into crucial information on the adult education programmes currently delivered by various providers. There is significant demand for systematization in the area and for the development of a comprehensive, coherent, national framework for monitoring adult learning. Moreover, the legal framework that presently regulates the planning, organization, design and implementation of adult education activities is fragmented.

A research project conducted by the Open University of Cyprus, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, in 2013 sought to monitor adult education providers, programmes and activities in the Republic of Cyprus and provide crucial information on the adult education programmes currently delivered by various public providers. The above mentioned project surveyed all public adult education providers with regards to quantitative as well as qualitative aspects. Questionnaires were sent to all public providers of adult educational programmes in Cyprus examining the type of educational institution, the type of programmes (job-related, non-job related), the total number of events (courses, seminars, lectures, etc.) per year, the total number of participants and of full-time staff, the type of funding (public grants, private grants, participation fees, etc.) as well as quality assurance processes. Selected findings are presented in this portrait.

Adult education is offered at public, semi-government and private institutions which, according to the type of education or training being offered, can be grouped in three categories:

- institutions offering formal adult education,
- institutions offering non-formal adult education,
- institutions offering (continuing) vocational training.

Below, we will list major institutions and organizations offering adult education clustered in the above mentioned categories.

Formal adult education:

- the five Evening Gymnasias and the two Evening Technical Schools in Nicosia and Limassol,
- Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training,
- the Open University of Cyprus,
- the Mediterranean Institute of Management,
- Higher Education Institutions (both public and private) offering flexible learning programmes for adults.

Non-formal adult education:

- the Adult Education Centres,
- the 41 State Institutes of Further Education,
- the Pedagogical Institute,
- Private Institutes registered with the Ministry of Education.

(Continuing) Vocational Training:

- the Cyprus Productivity Centre,
- the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration,
- afternoon and evening classes at the technical schools,
- the Apprenticeship Scheme offered jointly at technical schools and private industries,
- in-company courses funded by the Human Resource Development Authority.

In addition, certain ministries and civil society institutions or NGOs as well as social partner organizations are involved in the provision of a wide range of formal or non-formal adult education activities, both job-related as well as non-job related.

At all these institutions, courses may be offered free of charge, but most of them require fees paid. These fees differ according to the subject, provider, target group, urbanity of the area or even the number of residents.

## 2. Historical Development

### General Conditions for Adult Education

Adult education in Cyprus becomes a matter of public interest towards the end of colonialism.<sup>5</sup> In 1952 the first adult education centres were established in rural areas (see Karagiorgos, 1986). Compared to the rest of Europe, this can be seen as a relatively late establishment of adult education in Cyprus. It is directly linked to the socio-political situation in the Cypriot society.

First, the Cypriot society was a generally rural society with rudimentary industrial development until the mid-20s. Therefore, there was neither a working class nor a bourgeoisie to the same extent that existed in other European countries. Hence, there was almost no need for specialization, vocational training or liberal adult education as it existed in other industrialized societies. It is fair to say that there was basically no demand for the government or other agencies to establish institutions that would provide education and training for adults.

Another important factor that delayed the onset of adult education in Cyprus was the historical conditions that prevailed on the island over the preceding two centuries. During the period when Europe was experiencing the upheavals of the Enlightenment movement, Cyprus was under the Ottoman occupation which deprived the enslaved even the right to basic education. The Ottoman rule was succeeded by English colonialism, which at least focused on the development of primary education, but refused financial support for the expansion of secondary education. It was believed that the needs of the rural population were adequately served. Moreover, the British colonial policy preferred the rural population to be anchored in the lower social hierarchy (see Persianis, 1996).

From a sociological point of view, an important factor that may have prevented the society from recognizing the need for adult and continuing education is the fact that the Cypriot society is family-based and consequently child-centered. Parents traditionally bear much responsibility for assisting and supporting their children. This support mentality does not end with their adulthood, but continues until much later. The parents' support includes the covering of costs for secondary school and university studies, the acquisition of land for building a family home, the building and furnishing of the house, the assistance in raising their children and generally support both in professional and family life (see Research and Development Center Intercollege, 2004). This mentality was probably a deterrent for the average adult Cypriot from devoting time to continuing education and training after leaving school.

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5 For this chapter see Papaioannou, E. (2011): Context. Nicosia: Open University of Cyprus (unpublished document in Greek)



Another factor that affected both official policy on adult education and the response of the Cypriot society to the educational system was the fact that there was almost no unemployment, at least until very recently. According to official statistics, the unemployment rate was as low as 2.6 percent in 1995, rising to not more than 3.5 percent in 2005 which, in any case, is much lower than the average rate for most other European countries.

## Facts in the 20th Century's Chronology

First steps towards Adult and Continuing Education were made only in 1952, when the first afternoon adult education centers were established in major municipalities in the province (see Karagiorgos, 1986). The purpose of these centers was to create conditions for healthy employment and cultural education of their participants. The adult education centers offered training on diverse topics such as basic education, vocational training and family therapy. The centers were under the supervision of the Directorate of Primary Education. The teaching staff was recruited from regular primary schools.

As Persianis (1996) identifies, the subsequent development of adult education in Cyprus was the result of two major historical events: the independence and invasion. The establishment of the Republic of Cyprus and the rapid economic and social development has made continuing education a necessity, since all citizens of the new State had to improve their skills or acquire new ones in order to be able to contribute to the societal progress. Additionally, there were many citizens who held high positions in the public service and had insufficient qualifications, at least compared to younger employees. They sought to improve their qualifications. According to Persianis (see *ib.*), those who truly “paved the way” for continuing education were the former fighters,<sup>6</sup> who normally had priority in getting governmental positions after the establishment of the new State, provided that they would have the basic qualifications. Therefore, many of them were asked to enroll in Greek universities. In a society in which the model of the *adult* student was unknown, this was to demonstrate to the public that people can acquire academic qualifications also during adulthood.

The Turkish invasion and the consequent loss of much of the agricultural land was the second significant factor for the development of adult and continuing education. The transfer of large parts of the population from the countryside to urban centers imposed the shift from agriculture to industry, to the service sector and to tourism. The State shouldered the responsibility for the reactivation of the refugees and the enhancement of the productivity in order to address the devastating consequences of the invasion. The Ministry of Labour organized intense vocational

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6 “Former fighters” was a term for those who fought in EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) against colonialism in the national liberation struggle of 1955–1959.

courses, while the Productivity Center in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided vocational training to the refugees, establishing in refugee settlements ten laboratories. Remarkable was the State's effort to assist refugees through adult education programmes which took place in the refugee camps. As Persianis identifies, the training offered had four main objectives: to preserve the moral and social cohesion among refugees; to prevent cultural backwardness; to offer healing work to those who have lost their jobs; and to provide them with skills for their reintegration into the labor market.

The third wave of policies to promote targeted actions for lifelong learning is marked by the start of the negotiations on behalf of the Republic for accession in the European Union, in 1990. It was intensified with the accession of Cyprus to the European Union in 2004. The harmonization effort with the vision of making a European Area of Lifelong Learning and the constant calls of the European Union for the development of national lifelong learning strategies, are reflected in the Decision of the Council of Ministers in November the 7th, 2007 for the preparation of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy of the Republic of Cyprus. It was implemented from 2007 to 2013.

The National Lifelong Learning Strategy aimed to improve indicators regarding:

- the reduction of early school leaving;
- the reduction of illiteracy of young people aged 15 years and older;
- the increase of numbers of graduates of upper secondary education;
- the increase of adults' participation in lifelong learning; and
- the increase in the number of graduates from Higher Education Institutions in mathematics, science and technology (Planning Bureau, 2009).

Currently, a number of institutions operate on Cyprus providing adult education and vocational training. These are described more closely in chapter 5.

### 3. Political and Legal Framework

#### Political Framework

Key actors involved in policy development for education and training in Cyprus are the Planning Bureau (PB), the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance (MLSI) and the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA).

- The PB is a coordinating and policy-making body, which in cooperation with all Governmental Services and the Social Partners, collects and analyses information on the economy and proposes measures for future action, including the overall planning of education.
- The MoEC has the overall responsibility for the development and implementation of educational policy.
- The MLSI has overall responsibility for labor and social policy and its functions cover social protection, employment and industrial training.
- The HRDA is a semi-governmental organization whose mission is to create the necessary prerequisites for the planned and systematic training and development of the working population of Cyprus.

The political priorities in the field of vocational education and training include:

- the implementation of the comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy;
- the promotion of the education reform in all grades of education;
- the continuous upgrading of skills to match labor market needs;
- increasing female participation;
- the upgrade of training;
- the development of a National Qualifications Framework and its implementation; and
- the operation of the System of Vocational Qualifications.<sup>7</sup>

In this context there are significant efforts in creating a strategy for lifelong learning that covers all forms and levels of education from pre-primary education to adult and continuing education and training, including links to the labor-market (see Planning Bureau, n.d., p. 9).

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<sup>7</sup> Information taken from Cedefop/ReferNet Cyprus/Human Resources Development Authority of Cyprus (n.d.): A Bridge to the Future. European Policy for Vocational Education and Training 2002–2010. National Policy Report Cyprus

The National Strategy for Lifelong Learning addressed the following challenges and needs with regards to adult and continuing education:

- to increase accessibility of education and training systems for all citizens of Cyprus and to facilitate the links to the labor market;
- to improve infrastructure of education and training systems, including infrastructure for continuing training, accreditation, validation and certification of qualifications in order to meet the educational and training needs of Cypriot society;
- to enhance research and development activities, including skills forecasting and research on the economic and social outcomes of education and training;
- to attain efficiency in governance of lifelong learning systems, introducing new governance mechanisms and tools for efficient governance of the education and the training system (see i.b., pp. 37–39; also Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011, pp. 16–19).

The National Committee for Lifelong Learning consisted of representatives of the MoEC and the MLSI, the HRDA, the Productivity Centre, the Pedagogical Institute, the Public Administration Academy as well as the social partners. This body is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the strategy, the formulation of reform proposals and the formative evaluation of the measures taken.

The main policy measures in the Lifelong Learning Strategy that relate to adult education aim at:

- promoting continuing training and strengthening the employability of young, unemployed people and economically inactive women;
- modernizing teaching methods and curricula to include the use of technologies in teaching;
- supporting systems for the education and training of people with special needs and disadvantaged people;
- expanding the opportunities offered to young people to higher education studies in Cyprus by establishing new universities and regulating the operation of private universities and other tertiary education institutions;
- improving teachers' skills to a level higher than their basic vocational skills and/or the skills acquired during their professional experience;
- conducting feasibility studies for the operation of public vocational lifelong learning schools;
- strengthening the administrative capacity of the public sector through training and development;
- encouraging the private sector to get involved in education and training development;
- encouraging cooperation between relevant stakeholders, including policy makers, teachers' unions, trade unions, political parties, parents' and pupils' associations for lifelong learning (GHK, 2011, p. 8).

At present, Cyprus is establishing a Vocational Qualifications System. Within this framework, the feasibility and possibility of recognizing competence-based vocational qualifications acquired through various paths of non-formal and informal learning have been examined.

Even if there is no system for the recognition of prior learning at present, individual Higher Education Institutions may allocate a number of credits for prior learning at their own discretion when evaluating entry or transfer requirements. In addition, a recent modification of the law of the Cyprus Council for the recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KYSATS) allows the Council to recognize – again at its own discretion – transfer credits based on previous work experience as part of a formal degree title, or to recognize a number of credits for students who already possess GCEs or other internationally recognized qualifications (see *ib.*, p. 17).

Furthermore, Higher Education Institutions have also taken steps in that direction. Continuing Education Centre for example, operating within the University of Cyprus, has assigned learning outcomes and credits to the modules of some of its lifelong learning programmes.

Adult learners (over 17 years old or over 15 who work) cannot register in a daily public school but they can attend lessons at Evening Gymnasias and the Evening Technical and Vocational Education Schools (see OELMEK, 2011, p. 180). Adult graduates of the Evening Technical and Vocational Education Schools after the completion of a four-year programme are awarded a leaving certificate which is equivalent to that awarded to graduates of the Technical and Vocational Education Schools. They have then the opportunity to compete for a place at a Higher Education Institution in Cyprus and abroad.

At present, there are no specific measures to overcome barriers between the adult education sector and the higher education sector. Nevertheless, steps have been taken in creating a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in Cyprus recently, that could enhance mobility and permeability between the sectors. Cyprus has developed a proposal for a comprehensive NQF, which includes all levels and types of qualifications from all subsystems of education and training, from primary to higher education qualifications. The objective is to develop an inclusive framework, open to qualifications awarded outside formal education institutions. This will primarily be achieved by including the system of vocational qualifications – established by the HRDA – into the framework. These qualifications refer to occupational standards and validate learning outcomes acquired at work or in simulation through non-formal and informal learning.

The stakeholders responsible for accrediting qualifications work according to the existing legislative framework for their operation. However, new legislation on the operation of the NQF is considered necessary, which would clarify the cooperation among different stakeholders. Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning are expected to strengthen the links between initial and continuous vocational education and training and provide incentives for participation.

## Legal Framework

Legislative authority is exercised by the House of Representatives. In particular, all activities on the provision of adult and continuing education are legitimized by decisions of the Council of Ministers and/or Acts passed by the House of Representatives. There is not a comprehensive legislative framework for Adult and Continuing Education in Cyprus. Instead, there are a number of legislative provisions related to the different authorities involved in. The major pieces of legislation governing all sectors of adult education and training to date are as follows (see GHK, 2011, pp. 8–9):

- The set of laws which cover pre-primary, primary, secondary general and secondary technical and vocational institutions are Nos 5/71, 56/83, 123/85 and 154 (I)/99.
- In 1974, the Council of Ministers decided to place the Cyprus Productivity Centre within the jurisdiction of the MLSI. The Human Resource Development Law of 1999 (125(I)/99) replaced the Law of 1974 for the Industrial Training Authority, which was renamed as the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) (GHK, 2011, pp. 8–9). Civil servants and the self-employed are excluded from the HRDA's sphere of responsibility. The HRDA funds also initial training schemes.
- Law 1/1987 provided the basis for non-university higher education, both public and private. This Law was substituted by Laws 67 (I) 1966 to 1 (I) 2004 for the Establishment, Control and Operation of Institutions of Tertiary Education, both public and private, at non-university level.
- Law 234 (I)/2002 providing for the establishment and operation of the Open University of Cyprus and Law 198 (I)/2003 for the Cyprus University of Technology.
- Law 67 (I)/96 that empowered the Council of Educational Assessment and Accreditation (SEKAP).
- Decision number 35.585 (22/05/91) of the Council of Ministers, by which the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA) was established.
- Decision of the Council of Ministers 11.330 13 a–d established the Pedagogical Institute, which is supervised by the MoEC and offers training to secondary teachers.
- Law 13/66 of 1966 governs the operation of the Apprenticeship System.
- Decision 62.037 of the Council of Ministers in May 2005 established the Cyprus Productivity Centre.
- Decision 64.892 (17.1.2007) established the Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes.
- Decision 62.664 (28.9.2005) regulates the Operation of Open School Programme in cooperation with local authorities, for immediate implementation within the framework for Educational Reform.
- Regulations governing the operation of the Public Evening Secondary Schools (P.I. 45/1990 to P.I. 337/2010).

- Regulations P.I. 214/2000 to P.I. 295/2001 (Pre-Service Programme for Prospective Teachers of Secondary Education).
- Special provisions issued by the Department of Primary Education of the MoEC concerning the operation of the Adult Education Centres.
- Special provisions issued by the Department of Secondary Education of the MoEC concerning the operation of the State Institutes of Further Education.

In this chapter, the political and legal framework of adult and continuing education in Cyprus has been presented. Among others, it has become palpable that there is still a lot to be done in order for a comprehensive political and legal structure to be implemented. In what follows the financing of adult education is portrayed.

## 4. Financing Adult Education

### General information

Information concerning the financing of adult education in Cyprus is quite limited. In general, the question “who pays” or “who should/could pay” for adult education can be answered as follows (see GHK, 2010, p. 18):

- the state, comprising federal, regional or local authorities;
- private organizations (enterprises, unions, foundations, educational institutions);
- the individuals, i.e. the participants of adult education programmes;
- a combination of the above groups.

As regards the financial instruments, they can be differentiated into a “supply-oriented” and a “demand-driven” financing. In case of supply-orientation, funding goes directly from the financier to the educational institution. In case of demand-driven financing, financial means go from the financier directly to the learner and from there to the institution or provider of adult and continuing education (e.g. by means of vouchers).

Institutional financing may focus on inputs (e.g. number of trainers, number of hours etc.) or on outputs (for example, performance indicators such as number of participants who have been certified for a qualification or number of participants who have found a job after completing a course).

Cyprus indicated, since its accession in the EU, one of the highest percentages of GDP spent on education and training at about 7.8 percent, whereas private expenditure is estimated at about 3 percent of GDP (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011). Even in a period of severe economic and financial crisis there has been a slight increase in recent years in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture of 12.5 percent during 2009, of 3.5 percent during 2010 and 2.4 percent for 2011. In 2012 though, the economic and financial crisis began to affect public spending in education and educational institutions in Cyprus, including Higher Education Institutions: funding has undergone severe reductions.

Funding of activities regarding lifelong learning (including public adult education), is mainly based on European and on public funds. For the programming period 2007–2013, approximately €100 million from European Structural Funds were allocated to adult education (see GHK, 2011, p. 12).

Since most adult education programmes are State-run, funding is granted mainly through the State budget and is mostly free of charge or requires very low fees from the participants. For example, attendance at the public evening schools, computer afternoon lessons for employees or Greek lessons for the Turkish-Cypriots and vice versa is free of charge. Furthermore, several categories of adult learners may attend, free of charge, courses at the Adult Education Centers such as Greeks from diaspora



and foreigners, adults over the age of 65, elderly people living in care homes, political refugees and prisoners.

Private adult education involves fees which are set by the owners of the private institutes. The fees charged vary from one institute to another.

Most vocational training programmes are run by semi-government organizations or private companies; they involve fees. Much of the funding for continuing vocational training courses comes from the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA). The HRDA is not a training provider itself, but it subsidizes up to 80 percent training programmes implemented by public and private institutions and companies. Its main source of income is the Human Resource Development Levy, which corresponds to 0.5 percent of the payroll of each contributing company. All companies in the private sector as well as semi-governmental organizations pay the levy. Civil servants and the self-employed are excluded from the HRDA's sphere of competence.

Particularly active in providing continuing vocational training in the private sector are the accounting and the banking sector as well as semi-governmental organizations which offer on their own costs seminars to their employees or send them abroad for training.

Fees at the Adult Education Centres range from €20 to €59 per year, except for persons aged over 65, who do not pay fees. Fees at the State Institutes of Further Education (KIE) range from €225 to €394 per year, but they offer partial or full scholarships to students upon consideration of their financial situation and academic performance. In addition, children of families with three or more children pay reduced fees.

Institutions such as the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration or the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus do not charge fees for attendance at the pre-service and in-service courses offered to civil servants and teachers respectively. Most of the programmes of the Cyprus Productivity Centre involve fees and they are partially subsidized by the HRDA. The Open University of Cyprus as well as other public Universities charge fees for short vocational courses as well as for postgraduate courses.

No data is available on the total expenditure of civil society institutions, unions or NGOs which are involved in a wide range of non-formal adult education activities.

All expenditure on human resource development is tax deductible in the same way that other production expenses are treated. In this way, it is estimated that about 25 percent of total human resources development expenditure in the private sector is borne by the State and the rest is private funds (see Cedefop/ReferNet, 2012, p. 41).

In addition, there exist educational leave schemes for public-sector employees in Cyprus, which offer the opportunity of both paid and unpaid leave in order to acquire qualifications. The aim of these schemes is to meet government's needs and priorities for the education and training of public-sector employees. In certain other sectors, leave of absence for education and training purposes is stated formally in the

collective agreements, e.g. in the hotel industry, banking sector, carpentry or private clinics (see *ib.*).

Data from the Adult Education Survey (AES) show that across all countries formal education programmes are far more expensive than non-formal ones (see GHK, 2010, pp. 13–14). This is due to the fact that formal education programmes often have a longer duration and an institutionalized context which creates high costs of administration. The costs for formal programmes range from €150 to 200 in Finland and Belgium and up to €3,300 in Cyprus (see *ib.*, p. 13).

In contrast, average expenditures for non-formal courses are less than €250 in all countries, and are often even less costly than €100. These low costs for non-formal adult education programmes suggest that they are very short (probably only a few hours long) (see Boateng, 2009). However, it is also possible that the limited private costs are due to public subsidization.

## Consequences of the financial and economic crisis

The consequences of the financial and economic crisis on the provision and funding of Adult Education are diverse and difficult to estimate at present. Generally speaking, it seems that the correlation between participation in continuing education and training and initial education is even increasing in times of crisis. Taking that into consideration, people with less education “are hit threefold by an economic downturn: (1) their risk of unemployment is higher, (2) qualification requirements for employment increase, and (3) they participate less in adult education and further training than those with higher educational attainment” (GHK, 2010, p. 16).

Special compensatory political measures are taken to the advantage of certain target groups, such as long-term unemployed, young people and adults with low levels of basic skills. Due to the increasing unemployment rate these groups are now defined as “priority groups” in need of special support.

In view of the economic recession and aiming at minimizing its effects on the local labor market the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA), in close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, put forward a “Special Prevention – Action Plan”. This Plan includes a variety of measures aimed at both prevention and reduction of unemployment as well as at enhancement of employability through employment and training. The measures described below are targeted at the unemployed, economically inactive and employees:

- *In-company/On-the-job training programmes*

The Scheme aims at helping employers to retain their employees instead of laying them off, by participating in training programmes that meet their specialized needs.

- *Training programmes for upgrading the skills of unemployed persons*

The HRDA, in partnership with the Public Employment Service (PES), the Cy-

prus Productivity Centre (CPC) and the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus (HHIC), organizes upgrading training programmes for unemployed persons which cover important horizontal as well as job specific skills, which will help people to return to productive employment. The Scheme expired in December 2013 and the last training programmes will be implemented in 2014.

- *Accelerated initial training programmes for newcomers and other unemployed persons in occupations which are in demand*

Under this measure, the HRDA organizes accelerated initial training courses implemented by the Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC) and the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus (HHIC), which aim at giving theoretical and practical training in occupations which are currently in demand.

- *Scheme for the improvement of the employability of the unemployed*

The scheme aims at the improvement of the employability of the unemployed (including young secondary education graduates) by offering opportunities for improving their language and ICT skills and/or acquires work experience through placement in companies. The scheme is co-financed by the ESF under the programming period 2007–2013 and is in the process of completion.

- *Improvement of the employability of economically inactive women*

The Scheme aims at the improvement of the employability of the economically inactive women by providing opportunities for participation in training programmes as well as work experience programmes of eight weeks duration in enterprises. The Scheme is co-funded by the ESF under the programming period 2007–2013 and is in the process of completion.

- *Scheme for the Job Placement and Training of Tertiary Education Graduates*

It aims at strengthening the management capacity of enterprises by providing incentives to enterprises to offer employment, practical training and work experience for a period of six months to young tertiary education graduates. Graduates' minimum salary is €950 per month, while the maximum level of subsidy is €1,200 per month.

- *Scheme for the Support of Employment through the Individualised Training of the Unemployed in Enterprises*

The Scheme provides incentives to employers in the form of subsidy and guidance so as to encourage them to employ and provide individualized in-house training of three months duration for the long-term unemployed. The Scheme expired in December 2013 and the last programmes will be implemented in 2014.

- *Scheme for Job Placement of Unemployed Young Tertiary Education Graduates for the Acquisition of Work Experience in Enterprises/Organisations (co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) during the programming period 2007–2013)*

The Scheme that commenced in August 2013 offers job placements in enterprises/organizations to young unemployed tertiary education graduates less than 35 years old with limited work experience. The duration of the job placements is six months and a training allowance is provided. The Scheme aims to provide opportunities for the acquisition of work experience to young unemployed tertiary

education graduates less than 35 years old in order to improve their employability, while at the same time enabling enterprises to utilize qualified persons. The target is for 2,200 young unemployed to benefit from the scheme, with a budget of € 8.5 million.

Furthermore, the HRDA is promoting the following new Schemes:

- *Scheme for Job Placement of Unemployed Young Tertiary Education Graduates for the acquisition of work experience in enterprises/organisations (submitted for co-financing by the ESF during the programming period 2014–2020)*

This programme aims at offering young graduates less than 35 years old the opportunity to gain working experience. The target is for 4,500 young unemployed graduates to benefit from the scheme, with a budget of €15.5 million, covering the period 2014–2015.

- *Scheme for Job Placement of Young Unemployed Graduates of Lower Secondary, Upper Secondary and Post-Secondary Education of up to 2 years for the acquisition of work experience in enterprises/organisations (submitted for co-financing by the ESF during the programming period 2014–2020)*

This programme aims at offering young graduates less than 25 years old the opportunity to gain working experience. The target is for 4,500 young unemployed to benefit from the scheme, with a budget of €15.5 million, covering the period 2014–2015.

The implementation of these measures required increases in the budget of HRDA. Specifically, the HRDA budget for training subsidies increased from €12,642.261 in 2009 to €17,961.272 in 2010, indicating an increase of about 42 percent.

There is no data available for Cyprus regarding changes in public financial support for adult education implemented between 2011 and 2012 (see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013, p. 82).

According to the pilot project mentioned before (see p. 11) among public adult education providers, revenues are distributed as follows: More than half (55%) of revenues of the surveyed institutes come from private sector (enterprises), one fifth (22%) are public grants, 16 percent come from EU co-funded programmes and 7 percent are participation fees (see fig. 2).

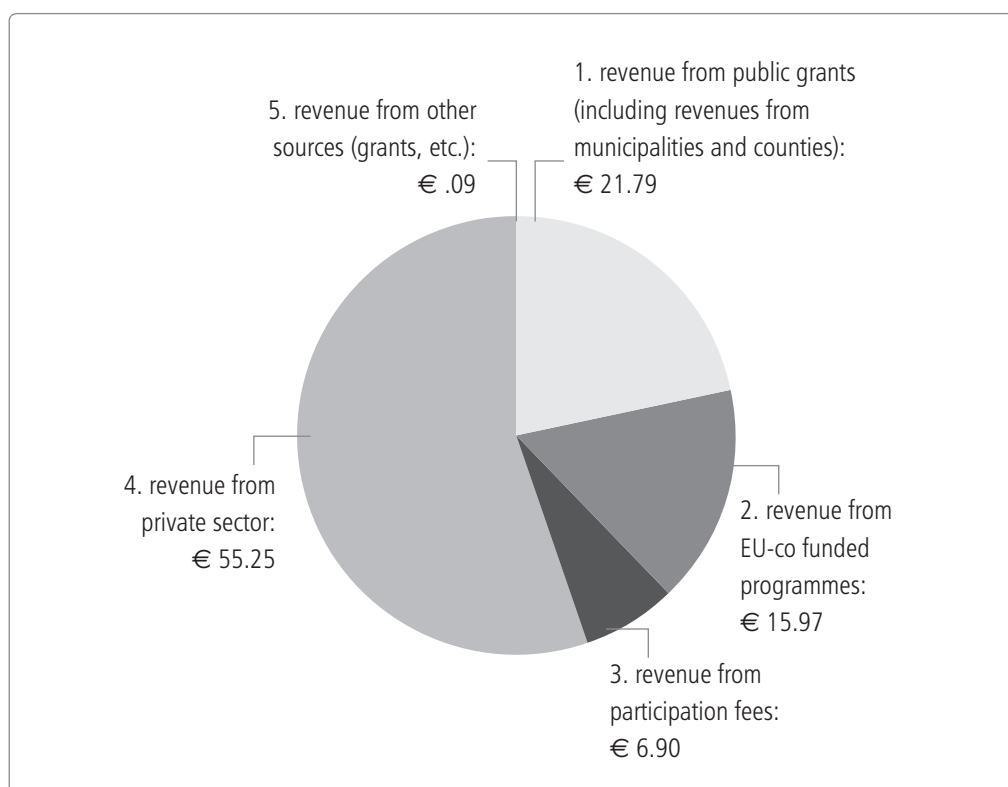


Figure 2: Distribution of revenues (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

## 5. Educational Institutions

Adult Education in Cyprus is provided by many types of educational institutions.<sup>8</sup> They can be differentiated in:

- public institutions,
- semi-governmental institutions and
- private institutions.

According to the type of education or training they offer, they may also be clustered in institutions offering:

- formal adult education,
- non-formal adult education or
- (continuing) vocational training.

In what follows we will describe the educational institutions under the latter three categories.

### Formal adult education

Formal adult education is offered at secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary education, as well as higher education level. At secondary level it is offered at evening gymnasia and evening technical schools. At post-secondary non-tertiary level it is offered at Post Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training. At the higher education level it is offered by the Open University of Cyprus and the Mediterranean Institute of Management, public institutions of tertiary education, which come under the jurisdiction of various ministries, as well as by 35 private institutions of tertiary education.

There are five *Evening Gymnasias*. Each gymnasium operates in one of the major towns in the premises of a regular lyceum. There are also two *Evening Technical Schools* operating in Nicosia and in Limassol respectively. The evening gymnasia and the evening technical schools offer adults and young school leavers the opportunity to gain the secondary school leaving certificate that is equivalent to those offered by the regular secondary and technical schools.

The *Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training* were launched in 2012 and operate in the afternoon, in the premises of technical schools. There are seven institutes in operation – two in Nicosia, two in Limassol, two in Larnaca and one in Paphos. The Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education

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8 Information for this chapter is taken from URL: [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Cyprus:Institutions\\_Providing\\_Adult\\_Education\\_and\\_Training](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Cyprus:Institutions_Providing_Adult_Education_and_Training). The categorisation adopted here has been reported in Eurydice.

and Training offer programmes of technical and vocational education and training to individuals that have graduated from secondary education. The completion of these programmes leads to the qualification of Higher Technician.

At the higher education level, adult education is offered at the University of Cyprus, Open University of Cyprus and the Mediterranean Institute of Management, public and private institutions of tertiary education. The *Open University of Cyprus* as a legal entity governed by public law, independent and autonomous, is located in Nicosia. It is the only Higher Education Institution dedicated to distance learning in Cyprus. By using open and long distance education its mission is:

- to provide everyone with an equal opportunity to learn, irrespective of age, place and year of study and
- to promote science, knowledge, learning, research and lifelong learning.

The university offers self-funded lifelong learning programmes besides its recognized academic programmes at all levels (undergraduate, masters and doctorate). In its context, among others, a new postgraduate programme in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning is offered which leads to a Master's and a PhD in the area.

*The Mediterranean Institute of Management* offers two postgraduate programmes in Management, namely the Postgraduate Diploma in Management and the Postgraduate Diploma in Management and Public Administration, in its premises in Nicosia. The latter is offered in evening hours.

There are four *public institutions of tertiary education (non-university level)* offering programmes in forestry, culinary arts and other occupations. These institutions operate under a relevant ministry or organization as follows:

1. the *Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus* which operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance;
2. the *Forestry College* which operates under the guidance of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment. It is responsible for the training of foresters and forestry graduates;
3. the *Tourist Guides School* which operates under the aegis of the Cyprus Tourist Organisation, whenever there is a need;
4. the *Cyprus Police Academy* which operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order. It promotes the training of police officers and sergeants. It also offers part-time training in the use of computers for members of the police force.

*Private institutions of tertiary education* offer a wide range of academic and vocational programmes at various levels in secretarial studies, aesthetics, food preparation, music, arts and drama, graphic design, hotel and tourism management, computer science, social sciences, education, business studies and engineering. All private institutions of tertiary education must register with the Ministry of Education and Culture.



## Non-formal adult education

The main providers of non-formal education are the Adult Education Centres, the State Institutes of Further Education, the Open Schools, the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration, the Free University, the Open Schools, as well as other private providers (e.g. universities, colleges and NGOs).

*The Adult Education Centres* come under the Directorate of Primary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture and operate on the premises of public primary schools in urban and rural areas. They offer afternoon and evening classes on various subjects, aiming at the social, personal or professional skills development of adults and pupils from 15 years on. There have been 395 Adult Education Centres in 2011, operating in urban and rural areas in all districts.

The Adult Education Centres have been acknowledged by the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus as the most important programme of general adult education with the provision of a variety of qualitative courses aiming at the general development of each adult's personality as well as the social, financial and cultural development of citizens in general. Their aims coincide with the State's developmental policy and the wider aims of the Ministry of Education and Culture regarding the provision of lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens of the Republic of Cyprus. In addition, they aim at reducing educational inequalities so that citizens may be successfully integrated and be enabled to act efficiently in a united Europe.

The Adult Education Centres were, initially, established, mainly in rural areas, in 1952. In 1960, following the independence of the Republic of Cyprus, 175 centres functioned with 3,750 members. From 1974 onwards they have expanded in most urban areas as well, and today they function in all areas of the Republic of Cyprus. The Adult Education Centres offer a variety of interdisciplinary courses which focus mainly on the teaching of foreign languages, arts and crafts, cultural programmes, health and other issues of general interest, as well as on teaching professional and vocational skills.

Furthermore, every year the Adult Education Centres organize free of charge learning activities for various target groups, such as people with literacy difficulties, people with special needs, prisoners, mentally ill and elderly people. Since 2010, the Adult Education Centres have undertaken the implementation of a project which involves learning the Greek language to foreigners, immigrants and other residents of the Republic of Cyprus, in collaboration with the European Social Fund Unit.

Assessment at the Adult Education Centres is mainly informal with no final examinations or practice tests required for certification purposes. Participants receive a Certificate of Attendance for the successful completion of each level and of any subject offered by the Adult Education Centres. Fees in the Adult Education Centres differ between urban and rural areas and range between €20 (Communities with less than 500 residents) and €51 (urban areas). Greek and Turkish language courses are free of charge; also individuals at the age of 65 and above may participate for free.



The general courses at the Adult Education Centres are taught by secondary and primary level teachers or prospective teachers waiting for appointment, while more practical courses are taught by individuals with specialist knowledge in the relevant field. Instructors are provided with a curriculum outline at the beginning of the course, but they are free to shape the programme according to the needs of the group.

The *State Institutes of Further Education* come under the Directorate of Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture and operate on the premises of public primary and secondary schools in urban and rural areas. They provide courses on foreign languages, computer studies and accounting to pupils and adults, aiming to combine socio-cultural development with the possibility of gaining more formal academic qualifications.

The State Institutes of Further Education started their function in 1960 as Foreign Language Institutes. They offer courses to pupils at all levels of education as well as to adults, both in urban and rural areas. Nowadays, 41 State Institutes of Further Education function all over Cyprus attended by more than 17.000 pupils every year.

The following subjects are offered:

1. Foreign Languages (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Turkish) up to the B1 or B2 Level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages;
2. Greek to Foreigners (speakers of other languages who live and work in Cyprus);
3. Accounting at all levels;
4. Consolidation lessons for Gymnasium and Lyceum pupils;
5. ICT;
6. Preparatory lessons for the Pancyprian Exams.

Assessment at the State Institutes of Further Education includes tests and oral assessment as well as final written examinations on a Pan-Cyprian basis. Progress reports are provided to participants each term and certificates of successful attendance are awarded to those who pass. Students can also take external examinations in order to obtain qualifications in foreign languages. The trainers are secondary school teachers, either seconded or paid an extra fee to teach in the State Institutes of Further Education. The headteachers at State Institutes of Further Education are seconded from the secondary sector to carry out this role.

The *Open School* is a new educational institution providing adult education in Cyprus. It is currently implemented in ten municipalities of the country and has a lifespan of just five years. It operates on a voluntary basis and is aimed at both children and adults offering them a wide range of courses in afternoon and evening hours. It serves the objectives of the Lifelong Learning agenda. One of its key aspects is employability. Employability is to be gained by contributing to the progress and prosperity of the municipalities that implement it. The Open School also aims at enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Cypriot society. Some of the following subjects are offered to adults: theater, painting, dance, music, cooking, sports,

fencing, oenology, Greek language courses to foreigners, etc. Generally speaking, the programmes offered cover sporting, recreational, educational and cultural activities. Moreover, at regular intervals, seminars are organized whose themes arise from the news; among them you will find: the global economic crisis and its consequences; cyber-crime and ways to protect citizens; education reform, etc.

The *Pedagogical Institute*, operating under the Ministry of Education and Culture, provides both compulsory and optional in-service education and training courses to teachers at all levels of school education, pre-primary, primary and secondary, as well as seminars for parents on topics such as: environmental education, psychology of education, introduction to the new curriculum at schools.

The *Cyprus Academy of Public Administration* (CAPA) is located in Nicosia and offers seminars, workshops and day events especially designed for civil servants, aiming to contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Civil Service through the development of the management capabilities of its departments. Pre-service training courses are obligatory for new entrants in the Civil Service. CAPA practises participative techniques in its training and development programmes, based on experiential and adult learning approaches. These encourage the use of work-based projects, thereby combining job-related problem solving with learning. It supports these initiatives with follow-up meetings and other activities so as to ensure the effective transfer of learning from the classroom to the workplace. Methods and techniques include lectures, group work, video, discussions, role-play and case studies amongst others. Those who attend receive a certificate of attendance which may play a role in promotion.

Moreover, non-formal adult and continuing education is being provided by the *Free University*. It is a series of lectures organised by the University of Cyprus with one of the Municipalities in Nicosia. This programme has expanded to cover Limassol, Paphos and the Cypriot diaspora in London. In Larnaca, the University cooperates with the Municipality in a similar way to operate the Zenonion Free University.

Additionally, social partner organizations, civil society institutions, the Greek Orthodox Church and NGOs are involved in the provision of a wide range of adult education activities, both job-related and non-job related. The two most important trade unions, the Pan-Cyprian Workers Federation (P.E.O) and the Confederation of Cyprus Workers (S.E.K), organize training programmes for their officers as well as cultural activities for trade unionists. The Pan-Cyprus School for Parents, a non-governmental body, organizes lectures and debates on issues concerning parenthood and social life in cooperation with the parent committees that exist in every school. The Greek Orthodox Church is a very influential body with a strong tradition in general adult education. Preachers and youth leaders offer non-formal adult education for all age groups using the study circle method. Also the Youth Organization of Cyprus, a Semi-Governmental Organization, which runs the Youth Centres' programme, offers among others educational activities to assist individuals, families and communities to achieve their potential. These centers were established mainly in refugee communities

(families which fled to southern Cyprus in 1974 after the Turkish invasion) to foster the well-being of children and their families.

Besides, private institutes registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture offer part-time courses in various subjects, including foreign languages, accounting, mathematics and computer studies. Some of them provide coaching for external examinations, especially for British and American examining bodies.

## Vocational training

Vocational education and training in Cyprus aims at improving the skills of people working in technical fields and offer training to unskilled or semi-skilled workers. It is offered by a number of institutions, state, semi-government or private ones. Such institutions are:

- the Cyprus Productivity Centre;
- the afternoon and evening classes at the technical schools;
- the Apprenticeship Scheme offered jointly at technical schools and private industries; and,
- private companies offering training courses, most of which are funded by the Human Resource Development Authority.

The *Cyprus Productivity Centre* (CPC) was established in 1963 by the Cyprus Government with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme and the International Labour Office. The Government took over full responsibility for its operation in 1974. The main objective of the Cyprus Productivity Centre is to assist private and public organizations to utilize their human and capital resources in the best possible manner in order to increase productivity. CPC offers short modular programmes that focus on technical occupations and management functions, with the basic aim to offer working people the opportunity to upgrade their skills and knowledge so as to improve their employability and increase their prospects of advancement and career development. CPC operates on its own premises in three major towns.

The *afternoon and evening classes* run in the technical schools offer continuing education and training to adults working in industry, as well as training aimed at the re-integration of unemployed individuals into the labor market. They are organized in a flexible manner to accommodate working individuals who may wish to attend either short modular courses leading to a certificate or longer programmes. They lead to the acquisition of a qualification equivalent to the school leaving certificate of the technical schools. They are offered in all major towns of Cyprus.

The *Apprenticeship Scheme*, operating since 1963, offers both technical education and in-company training to students 14 to 17 years old who do not wish to continue their studies in the formal education system after completing the 3-year lower secondary cycle of studies (gymnasium). The current Apprenticeship Scheme is a joint responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Scheme lasts for two years and provides alternate practical and theoretical training. The practical component takes place in the industry, and trainees are paid for working three days a week. Employers are subsidized by Human Resource Development Authority for accepting trainees. Theoretical training is provided at a technical school two days per week. Apprentices are trained to become builders, furniture makers, woodworkers, electricians (of domestic appliances or electrical installations), car mechanics, car electricians, sheet metal workers/welders, aluminium manufacturers, machine workers/fitters, plumbers, silversmiths/goldsmiths, dressmakers, cooks and waiters, depending on the needs of the labor market.

The present scheme will gradually be replaced by the New Modern Apprenticeship (NMA) which embraces a larger group of young persons between 14 and 21 years of age at two apprenticeship levels (preparatory and core). The NMA offers a wider spectrum of specialization, is co-funded by the ESF and the government of Cyprus and it will become fully operational by 2015.

The *Human Resource Development Authority* (HRDA) is a semi-governmental organization, which reports to the Government through the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance. Its mission is to create the necessary prerequisites for the planned and systematic training and development of human resources in Cyprus. The HRDA is not a training provider itself, but it subsidizes training programmes implemented by public or private institutions and enterprises (see chapter 4). Admission qualifications required and the pedagogical methods used vary according to the programme.

In addition to what is mentioned above, some Ministries offer training in the public sector:

- the *Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment* is responsible for the training of farmers in the Department of Agriculture's training centres;
- the *Ministry of Health* is in charge of the training of public sector nurses provided by the School of Nursing;
- the *Ministry of Justice and Public Order*, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and the private sector, offers classes and other programmes of professional training to prisoners;
- the *Ministry of Interior* takes actions in several levels, such as: education, vocational training, Greek Language, health, information for the integration of nationals of non-member countries.

Summing up, in this chapter the educational institutions providing formal and non-formal adult education and vocational training in Cyprus have been presented. The description made exhibits a diverse picture of agencies and organizations operating in the area under the influence of socio-economic and political trends and the European directives. In the following chapter the provision of adult education in Cyprus is depicted by using data from the research project.

## 6. Provision

At present there is no systematic monitoring mechanism at national level regarding adult education provision in Cyprus that covers all fields, from general adult education to continuing vocational training. Relevant information is split up while the legal framework that presently regulates the planning, organization, design and implementation of adult education activities is fragmented and central planning and strategy is rather missing (see chapter 3). Research lacks insight into crucial information on the adult education programmes currently delivered by various providers. At the same time, there is huge demand for systematization in the area and the development of a comprehensive, coherent, national framework. The above become an imperative given that Cyprus after its accession to the EU has increased investment in human capital and strengthened its efforts in developing an adequate Adult Education System and an effective Vocational Education and Training System, ensuring the delivery of necessary knowledge, skills and competences to the Cypriot population in order to adapt to a culture of lifelong learning.

Even if there is a wide range of adult education programmes offered by a blend of providers (public, private or voluntary bodies), no comprehensive data is available for this sector. There is a lack of information not only to performance-related features (such as programmes carried out or participation rates) but also to qualitative aspects (such as implementation of quality assurance processes and professionalization of the staff).

According to the data from the pilot survey conducted by the Open University of Cyprus (see p. 11), three out of four providers which were conducted are institutes of Public Law and nearly one out of eight are associations (see fig. 3).

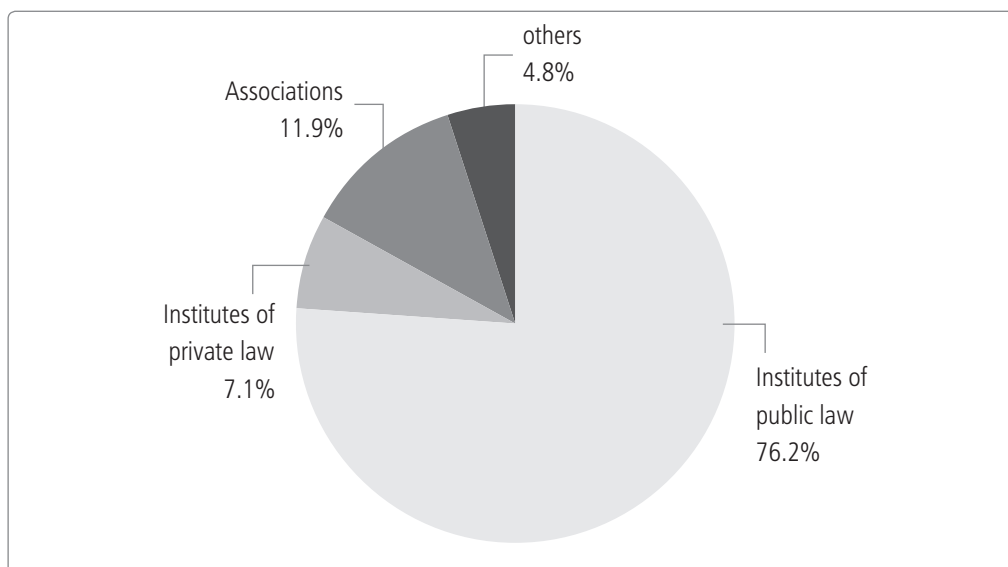


Figure 3: Legal form of adult education providers (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Most of them (70%) are supervised by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The rest is supervised by other Ministries or Semi-Governmental Bodies. One fifth of the surveyed institutes are State Institutes of Further Education, 15 percent are Post-Secondary Institutes, 11 percent are Open Schools, 9 percent are Universities and 9 percent Technical Schools (see fig. 4).

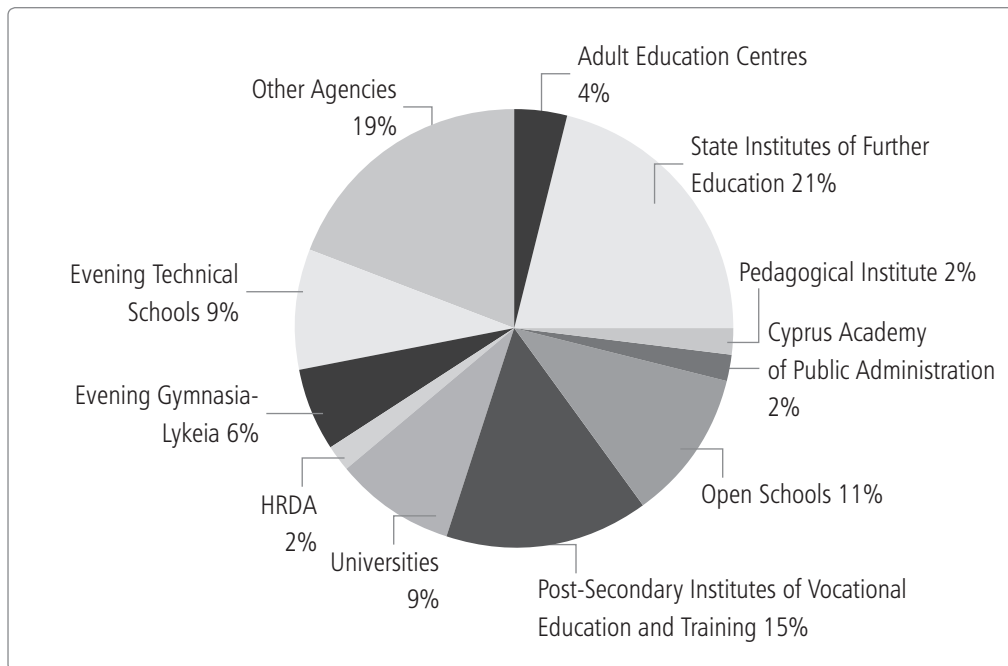


Figure 4: Type of the surveyed adult education providers (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Two thirds of the surveyed institutes operate in the afternoon or in the evening. The most common types of provision are seminars or lectures followed by long term courses (that is more than 60 hours) and workshops (see fig. 5). The vast majority of them took place in the classroom or in workshops (modes of provision). E-learning or blended learning constitutes about 6 percent of the surveyed institutes, mainly the Open University of Cyprus.

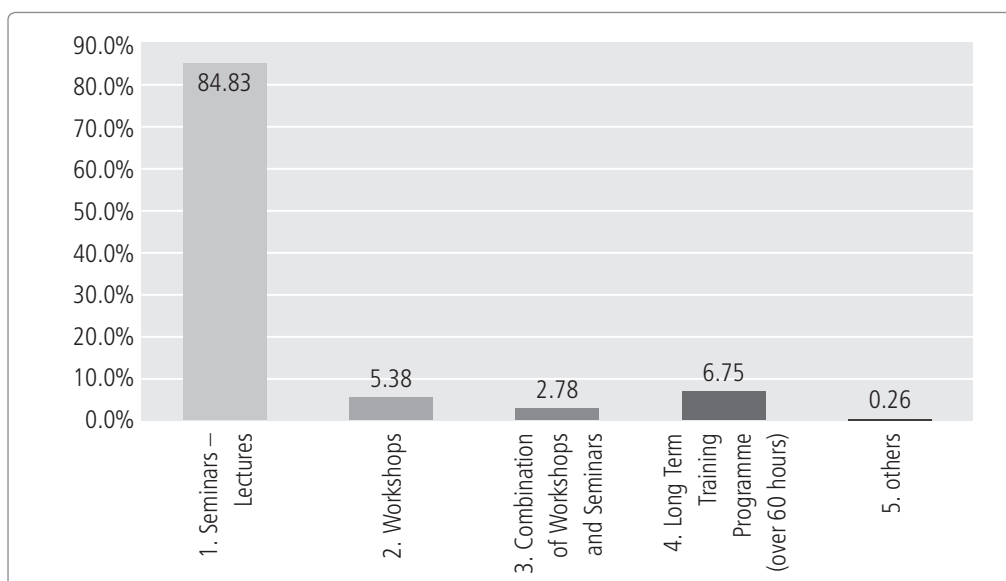


Figure 5: Modes of provision (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Regarding the subject areas offered, the profile of provision in the surveyed institutes is as figure 6 indicates.

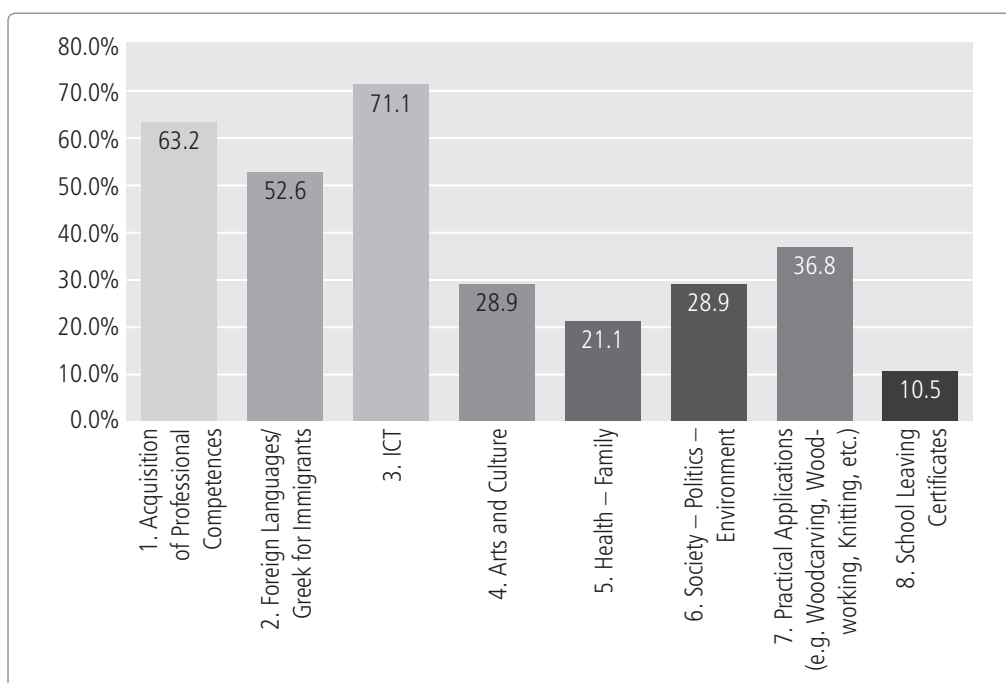


Figure 6: Provided subject areas (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)



ICT and acquisition of professional competences are the most frequently provided subject areas followed by languages (foreign and Greek for immigrants) and practical applications (e.g. woodcarving, woodworking, knitting, etc.). Arts and Culture as well as Society-Politics-Environment are provided by nearly 30 percent of the surveyed providers. One fifth of them provides also lectures and seminars on health and family issues and one tenth compensatory measures for the acquisition of school leaving certificates.

The dominance of ICT courses is particularly important since the results of the OECD PIAAC Survey (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences) reveals that one out of four Cypriot work forces seems not to have sufficient command over ICT skills and competences in a way to tackle the future challenges of modern societies. The results show also a considerable proportion of Cypriot adults struggling with the most basic skills (level 1 and below). More specifically, 19 percent of Cypriot adults perform at level 1 or below in numeracy and 15 percent in literacy. Even if in both fields the average performance of Cypriot adults is not far from the European average, the fact that the low performance group is much bigger than the high performance group remains. In the problem-solving domain in technology, the group of low performing adults (below level 2) is even larger: 24 percent, whereas the European average is much lower (15%).

Regarding quality assurance in adult education, two thirds of the surveyed institutes indicated no quality assurance mechanisms. Nearly two thirds of the provided programmes were accredited by the Ministry of Education and Culture, whereas one quarter of them was not accredited. Learning outcomes are certified mainly by the Ministry of Education and Culture (in two thirds of the cases) or they are not certified at all (one third). More than 60 percent of the surveyed institutes provide their participants with a Certificate of Attendance and to a lesser degree with a Certificate of Success. In the first case the Certificate is given without examination procedures. The most common form of examination is run by written tests and to a lesser degree by a combination of written and oral tests or practical examination (see fig. 7).

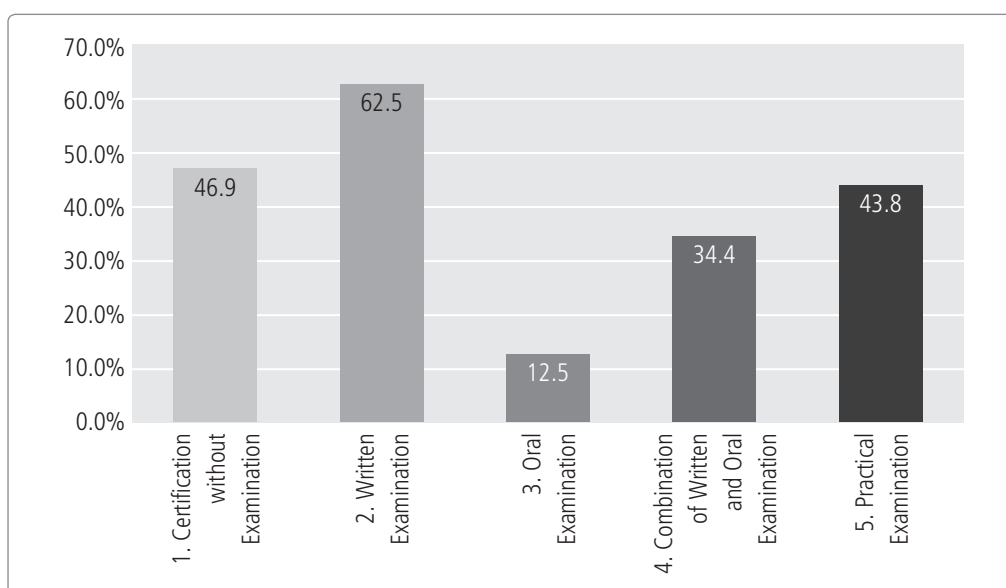


Figure 7: Modes of evaluation of learning outcomes (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Under the surveyed institutes, educational programmes for special groups were offered mainly for unemployed people and for women. This is not surprising taking into account the rise of the unemployment rate during 2012 and gender inequality aspects in Cyprus. Special programmes addressed to unemployed people are expected to multiply in the next years as unemployment rate, especially youth unemployment, high rocketed during 2013, due to the economic crisis and the austerity measures taken.

Regarding the provision of flexible programmes for adult learners offered by Higher Education Institutions, the picture is as described below (see Ioannidou/Katechi/Petrounakou, 2012). Many adults participate in institutions such as the Open University of Cyprus or in specialized programmes with a continuing professional development orientation within Higher Education Institutions. As regards the modes of provision for adult learners in Higher Education Institutions in Cyprus, these are quite flexible and include part-time, distance learning, e-learning and blended learning in the evening hours or on weekends.

- *Open University of Cyprus (OUC)*: Adult learners play an important role in the strategic aims and mission of the OUC, since the programmes are designed so as to fit in the needs of that target group. In addition to academic programmes at all levels, the OUC provides training and vocational programmes of short duration.
- *University of Cyprus (UCY)*: Provision of undergraduate and postgraduate courses as well as organization and conduct of the Programme Pre-service Training of Candidate Teachers of the Second Grade.
- *Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)*: Provision of courses aiming at upgrading skills and qualifications of graduates.

- *European University Cyprus (EUC)*: It operates a Continuing Education & Professional Development Training Center, which offers several computer and technology related courses for business professionals, as well as for casual home users. In addition, the university offers personal development training aiming at the acquisition of skills like time management or work-life balance skills.

Moreover, the European University Cyprus offers during the last 15 years cultural programmes under the name “University of Monday” aiming at providing popularized knowledge and cultural education in cooperation with the Theatre Group of Cyprus to the public.

The University of Nicosia (UNIC) offers professional studies with accredited course providers to adult learners. In its context, a Centre for Lifelong Learning operates aiming at extending academic learning beyond the confines of the classroom. Its target is to provide flexible programmes accessible to all, using traditional and technology-driven delivery methods with full study center support such as Guidance, Library facilities, Computer Lab facilities, Preparation and Official Testing Centre for GMAT and TOEFL.

Free Universities are cooperation schemes between the University of Cyprus and local communities aiming to promote the exchange of ideas between academics and the public. Free Universities operate in five places (Larnaka, Limmasol, Paphos, Ammohostos and London).

In addition, 26 Private Schools of Tertiary Education provide academic and professional study cycles, part or full time. A wide range of these study cycles are assessed and accredited by the Council for Educational Assessment.

## 7. Participation

The most relevant statistical sources to collect information on provision and participation of adult learners in education institutions in Cyprus are the Statistical Service, the Human Resource Development Authority, the Planning Bureau and the adult education institutions (including universities) themselves. The key data available regarding participation are gender, working conditions, and sometimes age and societal background. There is a clear lack of figures concerning the participation of adult learners in educational activities, since relevant research is very limited.

At European level empirical evidence on participation in adult learning activities is available in three different surveys: The Adult Education Survey (AES), the Labour Force Survey (LFS), and the Continuing Vocational Education and Training Survey (CVTS). These surveys are carried out in all EU countries, including Cyprus, and provide useful cross country data on adult participation in lifelong learning, each one with a different scope and methodology.

The EU Labour Force Survey indicates participation rates in lifelong learning in Cyprus 7.4 percent for 2012, which is below the EU average of 9.0 percent.<sup>9</sup> Participation here refers to persons aged 25 to 64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. The information collected relates to all education or training whether or not relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job.

According to the EU Adult Education Survey, the participation rate in education and training in Cyprus was above the EU average (EU 28) of 34.8 percent and indicated 40.6 percent in 2007 and 42.3 percent in 2011 (EU 28: 40.3%).<sup>10</sup> There are minor gender differences in participation rates in favour of men (males 43.1%, females 41.5%). The concept of participation in this survey refers to the age group 25 to 64 years and includes all learning activities undertaken the previous twelve months, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences, within personal, civic, social, and employment related perspectives (formal and non-formal education or informal learning).

The participation rate in non-formal education and training in Cyprus far exceeded the EU average in 2007 (39.5% compared to 31.2%) and 2011 (40.9% compared to 36.8%), whereas the participation rate in formal education and training is well below the EU average (2.9% compared to 6.6% in the EU in 2007 and 3.7% to 6.2% in 2011). In 2007, the EU participation rate in informal learning among adults, according to the Adult Education Survey, was 44.7 percent, notably higher than the rates for non-formal activities (32.7%) and formal education (6.3%). In Cyprus, participation rate in informal learning was over 60 percent, much higher than the EU average. It can therefore be regarded as a crucial element of adult learning (see European Commission, 2012, p. 50).

9 URL: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search\\_database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database)

10 URL: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng\\_aes\\_100&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_aes_100&lang=en)

According to this evidence, recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning seem to be crucial in Cyprus, and they are expected to provide strong incentives for participation in adult learning. Moreover, they can strengthen the links between initial and continuing vocational education and training and enhance permeability between education sectors. This is especially important to increase participation of adults in lifelong learning programmes to at least 12 percent by 2020.<sup>11</sup>

Participation is also supported through regulation on employees' release from work as public employers can many times offer "study leave" to their employees to encourage further education. In the private sector, many companies fund further and continuing education of their employees as well, most commonly in the accounting sector and the banking sector.

The Continuing Vocational Education and Training Survey reviews education and training activities occurring during paid working time or paid at least partially by employers (if training activities are organized outside paid working time). Here, participation rates refer to the percentage of employees participating in continuing vocational training courses.<sup>12</sup> According to CVTS III, more than one out of three employees in Cyprus took part in continuing vocational training courses in 2010 (37%), very close to the EU average of 38 percent. Nearly three out of four enterprises (72%) in Cyprus indicated themselves as training enterprises compared to the EU average of 66 percent, and one third of them (34%) declared having a training planning and/or budget.

According to the data of the pilot project of the Open University of Cyprus, 22.289 persons participated in educational activities in 2013 within the 44 adult education providers that took part in the survey. The data indicate quite large gender differences in participation within the surveyed institutes. Nearly two thirds of the participants during 2013 were women (14.132) and only one third (8.157) were men (see fig. 8).

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11 The ET 2020 benchmark is 15 percent.

12 URL: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng\\_cvts01&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_cvts01&lang=en)

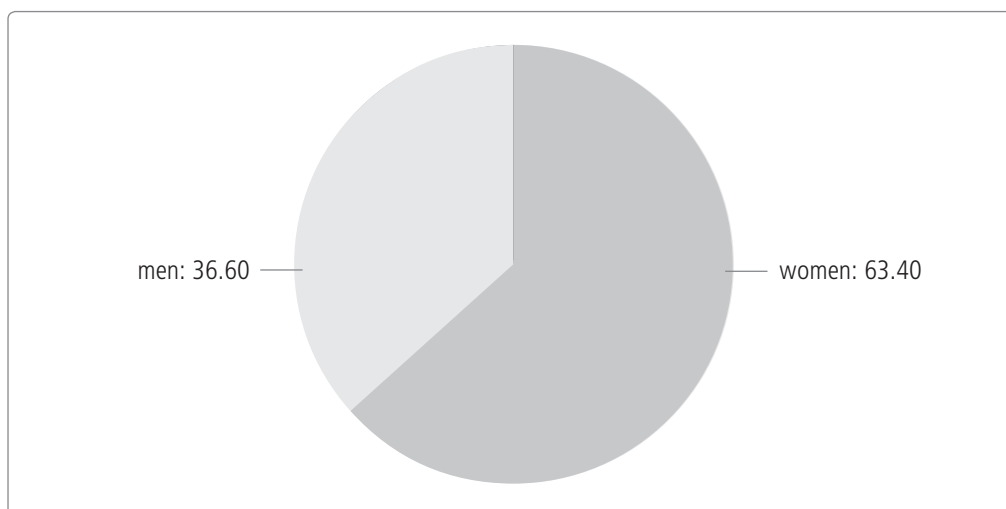


Figure 8: Gender distribution in educational activities (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

The majority of the participants (56%) belong to the age group up to 35 years, 36 percent are between 36 and 50 years and just 8 percent are between 51 and 67 years (see fig. 9). It seems that the probability to participate in adult and continuing education decreases rapidly with increasing age. This is particularly true for Cypriots (see also chapter 2).

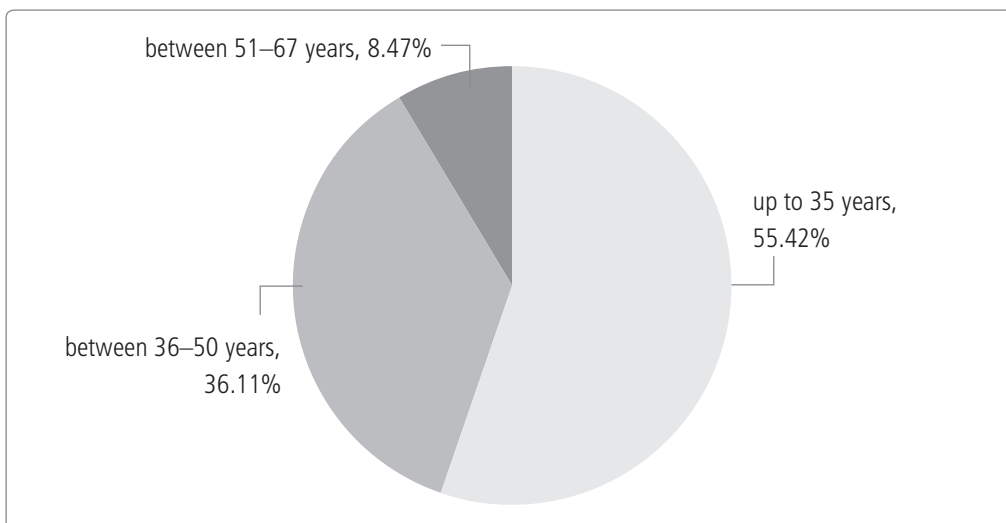


Figure 9: Age distribution to educational activities (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Around one out of three participated in subjects with practical and creative applications such as woodcarving, woodworking, knitting, etc. and one out of four in subjects which were job-related. The other subject areas follow with relatively low participation rates (languages, health and family issues, social/political and environmental issues, culture and arts), whereas the use of ICT is quite low (3.3%) (see fig. 10).

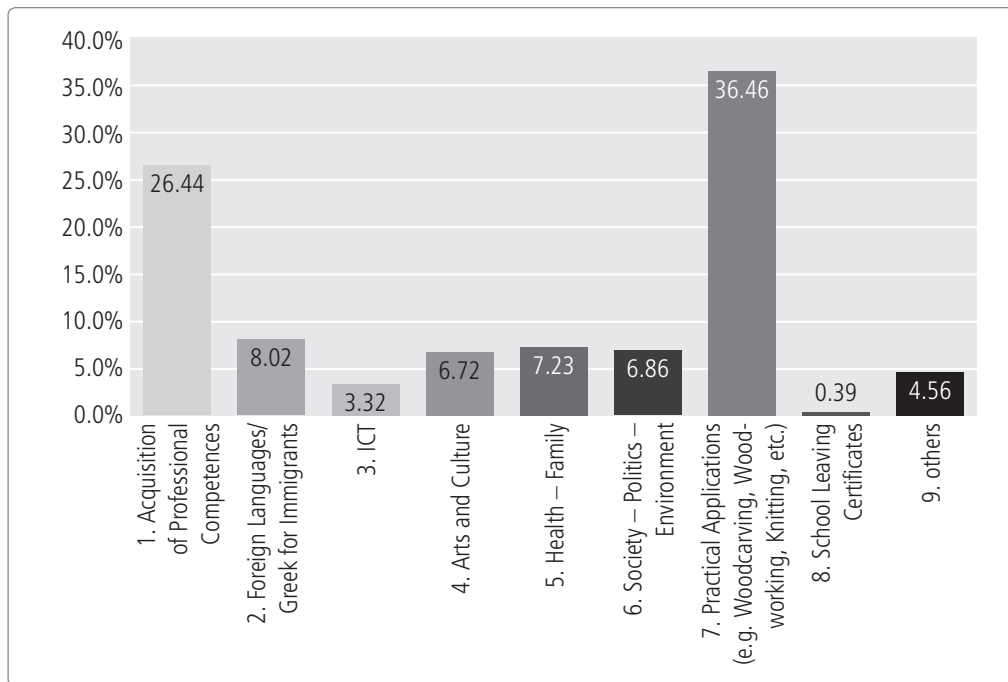


Figure 10: Participation quotes to subject areas (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

The majority of the participants (60%) attended lectures and seminars, nearly 12 percent took part in long term continuing vocational programmes (longer than 60 hours) and in workshops and around 16 percent participated in other forms of provision (see fig. 11).

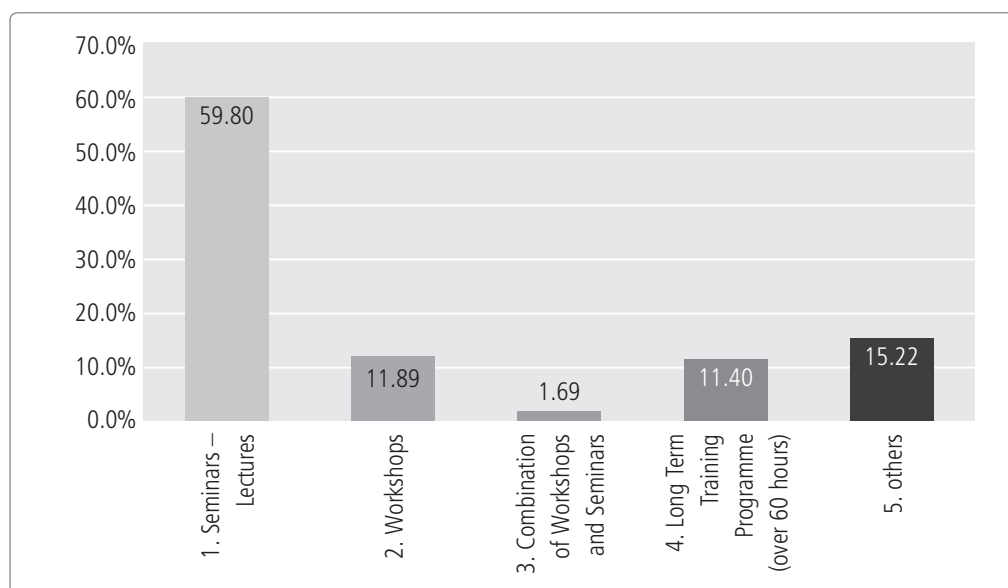


Figure 11: Participation quotes to modes of provision (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

At present there is no research available at national level investigating obstacles and barriers to adult participation in education and training. There are certain factors that facilitate the participation of adult learners in education and training institutes. Two aspects should be noted at first place: the existence of a strong cultural trend in favour of more and better education as well as the policy and legal framework that enables and encourages Cypriots to continue their studies even at Higher Education Institutes through financial and other incentives (e.g. study leave, student welfare services). Almost all universities offer appropriately designed programmes that facilitate self-learning and distance learning. The content of these short cycle programmes is in most cases relevant to labor market needs. It should be noted that the Republic of Cyprus has taken up specific measures in order to open up higher education to adult learners, namely designing and enforcing legal framework and providing financial and other incentives to students. As a result, increasingly more adults attend flexible higher education programmes and/or make use of flexible learning provisions. In addition, a number of students older than 30 years can be accepted by public universities on the basis of special criteria and not through traditional exam routes. Typical patterns for adult learners in education and training institutions in Cyprus are part-time, distance, e-learning and blended learning, in the evening hours or on weekends. This is also true for Higher Education Institutions.

Participation in adult education for special groups is mainly encouraged through financial incentives (e.g. free courses for people over 65 years or free Greek language courses for Turkish-Cypriots and migrants and vice versa).

In addition, there are several incentives (legal or financial form) for participation in continuing vocational training. The adults' participation is facilitated by the employers, whereas public employers can many times offer "study or training leave" to their employees to encourage further education. In the private sector many companies fund further education of their employees as well, most commonly in the accounting sector and the banking sector. Nearly half of all Cypriot enterprises (48%) provide CVT courses for their employees which are below the EU average of 56 percent. Though, the cost of CVT courses as a percentage of total labour cost is slight above the EU average (2% compared to 1.6%).

Courses for unemployed people e.g. in foreign languages (English, Russian), in the use of ICT, as well as in acquisition of professional experience and competences in "real" (work-based) situations are mainly subsidized by the Human Resource Development Authority and the ESF. Participants get between €5 per hour up to €125 per week as a training allowance. On the other hand, there are some factors that might inhibit participation. The current economic crisis is expected to have an impact on the participation of adults in education and training since the financial cost of the programmes could be an obstacle for attending them. Further, the absence of a system of recognition and validation of prior learning or work experience should also be mentioned, although Cyprus has recently made progress in this area and it is about to establish such a system. The development of the Cyprus National Qualifications Framework gave a strong impetus in this direction.



## 8. Staff and Professionalism

Adult and Continuing Education in Cyprus employs a large number of administrative, managerial and other supportive staff as well as teaching staff (adult educators). The majority of them is temporary and not permanent, as figure 12 shows. This raises a number of issues in relation to the professional profile of those involved in delivering adult and continuing education that will be discussed below.

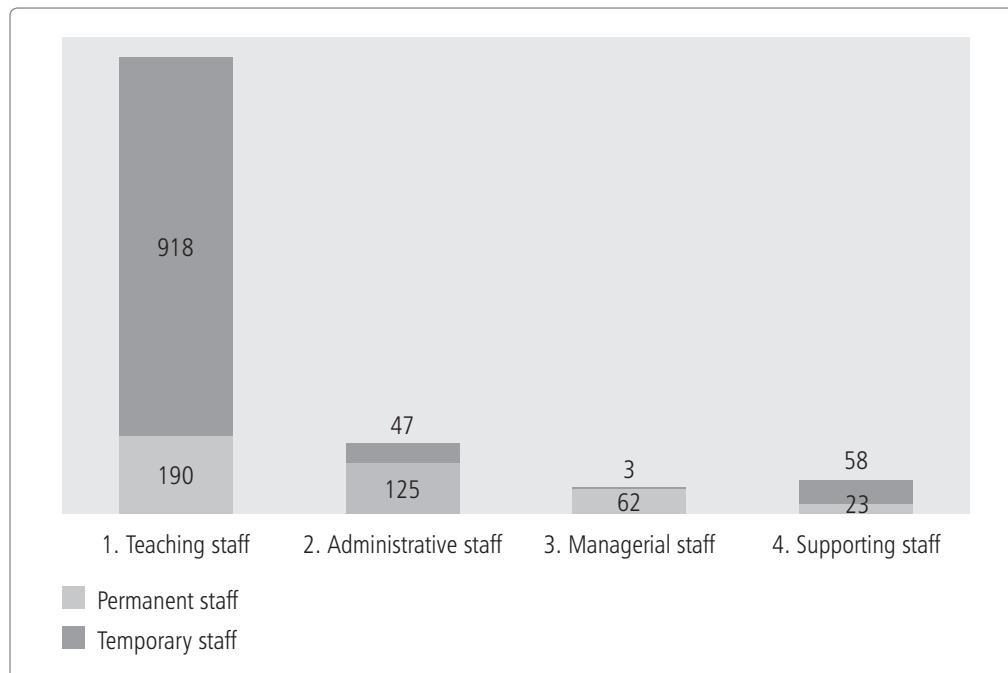


Figure 12: Staff distribution to occupational status (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Since the field is not centrally organized there are not official statistics and much information in the area. The latter is fragmented, while a variation can be observed among the different educational institutions offering adult and continuing education.

For instance, regarding formal adult education, trainers in the evening schools are regular qualified secondary school teachers who are assigned to teach in these particular schools. As they are required to work in the evening, each teaching period counts as one and a half. The teaching staff of the Mediterranean Institute of Management consists of experts who hold relevant degrees in the subjects they teach. They are full-time public servants.

In the Adult Education Centres, the general courses are taught by secondary level teachers and unemployed graduates who hold a diploma relevant to the course they teach. They are waiting to be appointed as teachers. More practical courses, such as dressmaking and dance are taught by individuals with specialist knowledge in the

relevant field. The trainers of the State Institutes of Further Education are always secondary level teachers. They have usually experience in the formal education system, and are either seconded to teach in the State Institutes or paid a special fee for doing so. The headteachers of State Institutes are seconded from secondary sector to carry out this role.

However, no provision for formal training of the adult educators on how to teach adults in the above contexts is reported, even if the continuous development of the educators and the improvement of their status and skills are considered imperative for implementing the Education Reform. Scattered endeavors are described<sup>13</sup> that do not include sessions on adult learning and education as can be seen from the actions described beneath.

The Pedagogical Institute (PI) implements an organized policy for the training of teachers by organizing a series of courses and seminars, compulsory or optional. The compulsory courses comprise in-service training courses for newly appointed heads of secondary schools and deputy heads of secondary schools. The University of Cyprus, in an effort to upgrade the pre-service training previously offered to secondary education teachers by the PI, undertook the course in collaboration with the MoEC in 2008. Unfortunately, this attempt was terminated in 2012 due to the lack of financial resources and because no more secondary teachers are appointed in public schools. Additionally, for the secondary technical and vocational staff, a special programme provides industrial placement for trainers. This programme allows trainers to become attached to industry and furnish them with the opportunity to update their knowledge and keep abreast of technological changes. Another opportunity for in-service training for teachers is offered to them through the European Lifelong Learning Programme, which subsidizes their participation to training seminars in other European countries.

An important development regarding the training of trainers has been taken by the HRDA with the establishment of the Training of Trainers Network (TTnet) Cyprus under the coordination of TTnet/Cedefop. In November 2006, the Launching Conference of the Network was organized in Cyprus. TTnet is a network of national networks that allows key players and decision makers in the field of training of teachers and trainers to share practices, knowledge and expertise on key issues in the training and professional development of vocational teachers and trainers.

Moreover, it is worth emphasizing the establishment of a system for the assessment and certification of training providers, including trainers, which is promoted by the HRDA (see Zenios 2013). Through this, trainers of vocational training, vocational training institutions and vocational training infrastructure are assessed against specific criteria to ensure that they qualify for certification. The project is co-funded to 85 percent by the European Social Fund (ESF) of the EU and the HRDA.

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13 Cedefop ReferNet Cyprus/Human Resources Development Authority of Cyprus (n.d.): A Bridge to the Future. European policy for vocational education and training 2002–2010. National Policy Report. Cyprus, pp. 47–50

Focusing on the trainer of vocational training<sup>14</sup> an action has been implemented since January 2014. It involves eligible candidates applying for assessment for the Vocational Qualification. They are required to meet the following academic qualifications and experience: be a secondary education graduate with 5yrs professional experience as a trainer of Vocational Education and Training; be a holder of a university degree with 3yrs professional experience as a trainer of Vocational Education and Training; be a holder of a university degree with 3yrs professional experience as a trainer of Vocational Education and Training; be a holder of a Master's degree in Vocational Education and Training and/or Continuing Education and/or Lifelong Learning and/or Training of Adults and/or Training of Trainers with 2yrs professional experience as a trainer of Vocational Education and Training. Trainers are awarded a certification only for pedagogical skills and not for teaching subject.

Assessors of candidates for the Vocational Qualification should have the following academic qualifications and experience: a university degree in any field; a Master's degree in Vocational Education and Training and/or Continuing Education and/or Lifelong Learning and/or Training of Adults and/or Training of Trainers; 8yrs professional experience in a related subject area, at least 5 of which as a trainer of Vocational Education and Training. Assessment methods used include: observation in real working conditions (real classroom situation) or in accepted simulated conditions (delivery of a sample training programme); preparation and presentation of a project assigned by the assessors; personal interview and written exam.

Besides the above, an initiative for the systematic preparation of the adult educator and trainer has been taken by the Open University of Cyprus with the commencement (in the academic year 2014–2015) of a new postgraduate programme in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning. The programme awards an MSc in “Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning” and examines dialectically the two core pillars of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning: a) General Adult Education and b) Vocational Education and Training. Among others, it aims at preparing systematically the trainer, designer, coordinator or evaluator of continuing education programmes and upgrading the knowledge, skills and competencies of adult educators. It offers the following modules: Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning I & II, Vocational Education and Training I & II, International Trends in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning-Comparing Systems and Practices, Research Methodology in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning, Critical Reflection in Adult Learning and Education, Access and Participation of Adults in Education, and the option for a Master's Thesis for those who want to further pursue Doctoral Studies in the area.

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14 Relevant information taken from Zenios, I. (2013): The Trainer of Vocational Training as Part of the Two HRDA Certification Systems: The certification of training providers and the certification of vocational qualifications. Presentation at Peer Learning Activity in Cyprus, 5 December 2013. URL: [www.moec.gov.cy/aethee/omadiki\\_mathisi/loannis\\_zenios\\_human\\_resource\\_development\\_authority\\_cyprus.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.cy/aethee/omadiki_mathisi/loannis_zenios_human_resource_development_authority_cyprus.pdf)

The programme is addressed to:

- Graduates of accredited institutions of Higher and Technological Education who aspire to obtain knowledge and skills in the field of Continuing Education, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education.
- Professionals working in the fields of Continuing Education, Lifelong Learning, Adult Education, Vocational Education and Training (e.g. Managers, Administrators, Staff, Principals in Public and Private Agencies, Bankers, Professionals working in Ministries, Municipalities, Non-Governmental and Non-Profit Organizations, other Organizations that offer Training Programmes in Adult and Vocational Education and Training, etc.), mainly but not limited to Cyprus and Greece.
- Teachers, Trainers, Educators who teach adults at all levels (e.g. in the State Institutes of Further Education, Adult Education Centres, Evening Schools, Second Chance Schools, Universities, Centres of Lifelong Learning, etc.), mainly but not limited to Cyprus and Greece.
- Researchers at all levels.

## **The professional profile of adult educators**

In the light of the above, it becomes palpable that generally adult and continuing education in Cyprus is delivered by teachers/trainers who up until recently have had no specific education in adult education and learning. They had no background in “andragogy”; their background has either been that of teachers in primary education or in secondary education (university graduates) with some sort of in-service training but not in the education of adults. Moreover, teachers and trainers in adult education constitute a very mixed group with a broad variety of qualifications – in most cases recruited on the basis of an assessment of their first degree subject knowledge.

In adult education, area where professionalization and institutionalization is low, it has been left to the individual teacher to provide time and money for supplementary training, e.g. attending a Masters course in adult education. As a result of the absence of a regulatory framework for Adult Education in Cyprus and the low degree of institutionalization in almost all parts of adult education, which limits the possibilities of offering teachers/trainers normal occupational conditions (since the majority work on a part-time basis), a low degree of professionalization in the area is observed, and a very little focus on the education of adult educators.

## 9. Research and Higher Education

As stated before, adult education in Cyprus is characterized by fragmentation and lack of a regulatory framework. Consequently, it is only very recently that, in the light of the European agenda for lifelong learning, academic studies, particularly focused on the area, have been organized, and some limited research has been conducted.

### Academic studies

The Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus is in charge for the development of institutions of tertiary education. During the past 21 years a series of measures have been undertaken aiming at the expansion of higher education. The establishment and operation of the University of Cyprus, the first Cypriot University in 1989, contributed to the upgrading of tertiary education and laid the foundations for the involvement of the university in the social and economic life of Cyprus. The efforts continued and were intensified throughout the following years with the improvement of graduate and postgraduate study programmes of the University of Cyprus, as well as the establishment by law of another two State Universities: The Open University of Cyprus in 2002 and the Cyprus University of Technology in 2003. In June 2005, the House of Representatives approved the Law which regulates the establishment and operation of private universities with the aim to further upgrade the private tertiary education. As a result, four private universities have been established in recent years and contribute to widening participation at higher education institutions: The European University, the Frederick University, the University of Nicosia and the Neapolis University of Pafos.

At academic level, only in one of the above institutions of tertiary education, the Open University of Cyprus (OUC), are offered adult education studies, as part of the postgraduate studies programme. In particular, since 2006, in the Education Studies Graduate Programme, a Master's in Education with specialization in Continuing Education has been offered.

From the academic year 2014–2015 a new postgraduate programme in “Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning” is delivered by the OUC. This programme fills a key gap in the market of Cyprus and of south-eastern Mediterranean region, by focusing on Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning as a scientific field. Moreover, the OUC is the only university in Cyprus that supports studies in this direction due to the existence of an academic member of staff and a number of external research associates, specialized in the area.

Another key gap that fulfills the Master's Programme in “Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning” is that of providing specialized knowledge and skills to those involved in continuing education, e.g. teachers, organizers, managers, evaluators and

other staff working in adult and continuing education and vocational training. As stated in chapter 8, teachers and trainers in adult education and vocational training in Cyprus consist of a heterogeneous group with different knowledge, skills and competences, and they do not have professional status. The necessity for such programmes and for the accreditation and professionalization of those who are actively involved in the field of continuing education is urgently raised both by the Ministry of Education and Culture (in a recent conference in March 2013) and the Human Resource Development Authority, which sets graduate studies in continuing education and lifelong learning as a requirement for somebody to join a register of trainers in vocational education and training.

Based on the above, the Master's Programme at the OUC contributes to a unified and systematic preparation for the profession of the trainer, designer, coordinator, assessor of continuing education programmes, and significantly upgrades the knowledge, skills and competences of its participants, thus contributing to the improvement of the quality and efficiency of the delivery system of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning in Cyprus. Furthermore, the Master's provides participants with the cognitive (theoretical and practical) and metacognitive (methodological, epistemological) skills that enable them to respond professionally to the increased demands of the role of the adult educator in both General Adult Education and Vocational Education and Training. The new programme is expected to attract prospective students from other countries to undertake original research in various aspects of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning for study at the doctoral level. The big numbers of applications for this particular programme (317 full completed applications in February 2014) are testaments to the increased demand in graduate studies in adult education in Cyprus.

## Research

The relevant bibliography and research at university level concerning adult education and vocational training is limited in Cyprus. Little research has been systematically conducted. An exhaustive investigation of relevant titles in databanks and libraries could only provide limited results. The following research focuses on adult education:

Title	Institution	Content	Duration
Empowerment of adult learners in evening gymnasias/lykeia in Cyprus	Open University of Cyprus	It explores the extent to which and the ways in which adults are empowered in the context of a case study evening gymnasium/lykeium in Larnaca (Doctoral Thesis).	09/2010–ongoing
Monitoring adult education in Cyprus	Open University of Cyprus	The research seeks to portray and picture the adult education agencies and activities in Cyprus.	01/2012–12/2013
Enhancing adult distance teaching and learning in higher education: the case of the Open University	Open University of Cyprus	The research project aims at shedding light on the internal dynamics of learners' and tutors' adult professional learning, its context and its occasions, in the course of an undergraduate and postgraduate distance learning programme of studies run by the Open University of Cyprus (OUC) and the Hellenic Open University (HOU).  The final purpose is to inform the organization, design, implementation and further development of distance learning courses in higher education, and contribute to their future reorganisation.	01/2010–12/2012
Exploring the teaching and learning of ICT to adults in Adult Education Centres in Cyprus	Open University of Cyprus	The project aims to explore digital literacy teaching approaches for adults and the associated pedagogy in the Adult Education Centres in Cyprus.	01/2012–12/2012
The Master's thesis in distance learning education: challenges and difficulties adult learners face	Open University of Cyprus and University of Peloponnese, Greece	Comparative study with adult students who completed their Master's theses at the OUC and the Hellenic Open University, respectively, aiming at tracing the challenges they faced as adult learners in the course of completing their thesis.	01/2011–12/2012
Adult learning principles in teaching and learning computers to adults: The Case Study of the State Institutes of Further Education (SIFE) in Cyprus	Open University of Cyprus	The study explored the extent to which adult learning principles are applied in the context of the State Institutes of Further Education (SIFE) with regard to the teaching of ICT.	01/2010–12/2011

**Table 3: Research on adult education**

Definitely there are many issues and topics in adult education that need to be explored in Cyprus. Some of these are the following:

1. There is a clear lack in monitoring and reporting procedures regarding the development of participation of adults in education and training.
2. It would be interesting to investigate the impact of the opening of higher education to adults, for example, on their learning performance or their professional development.
3. A monitoring system for the adults regarding recognition and validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through adult education and training by the labor market would be of particular importance.
4. Especially interesting would be research on the impact of the financial crisis on the participation of adults (possible changes of the socio-demographic profile of the adults attending higher education programmes).
5. Research on means to further facilitate adult participation in education and training (i.e. supporting structures such as child care or career guidance; to further enhance equal opportunities in this field).

It is expected that the research orientation of the new graduate programme in the OUC as well as research collaborations between the OUC and other adult education departments and programmes of Higher Educational Institutions abroad (such as: University of Glasgow, University of Malta, Essen University, Tallinn University, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), will contribute positively to the advancement of knowledge in this very new scientific field in Cyprus, and will provide evidence for policy making. In what follows the international context of the Cypriot adult education and training is illustrated.



## 10. International Framework

The accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union in 2004 accelerated developments in the adult education system. The international context of the Cypriot adult education and training increased significantly in the past ten years. By making extensive use of its governance instruments (project funding, peer learning activities, policy papers and action guidelines) the EU became a main reference point also for Cypriot adult education and training policies. Through funding of certain actions and measurements such as the New Agenda for Adult Learning, the Copenhagen Process or the Establishment of National Qualifications Frameworks in alliance with the European Qualifications Framework, the EU sets priorities in the educational policy agenda and decisively influences national policy making (see Ioannidou, 2010). Through the open method of coordination which is based on reciprocal learning between the member states, EU Member States are committed to work together toward shared goals and benchmarks. Within this framework five priorities are set in the Action Plan for Adult Learning which Cyprus implements:

1. Analyze effects of reforms in other educational sectors on adult learning.
2. Improve the quality of provision and staffing.
3. Increase the possibilities to achieve a qualification at least one level higher.
4. Speed up the process of assessing and recognizing non-formal and informal learning for disadvantaged groups.
5. Improve the monitoring of the adult education sector.

Through these European initiatives visibility and scope of adult education have been increased and demand for adult education and training has risen constantly in the previous years. This is recorded in terms of provision and participation (see chapter 6 and 7). Adult education and training have become an integrated part of the Cypriot National Lifelong Learning Strategy.

There are significant links to other sectors of the education system such as the general and vocational education and the higher education. Schools and higher education institutions offer in their venues flexible learning programmes for adults covering from general education (literacy, parental education, languages, health and social issues, traditional handicraft, etc.) to professional development and job-related courses (aiming at “soft” skills and “hard” professional competences).

Especially the higher education sector has markedly increased in importance both in quantitative and qualitative terms. The trend among Higher Education Institutions is developing flexible learning provisions (such as e-learning, blended learning or distance learning), and flexible delivery of education programmes for adult learners. These courses are offered at a graduate or postgraduate level or they take the form of short duration training and vocational programmes aiming at upgrading skills and professional competences (see Ioannidou/Katechi/Petroneakou, 2012).

A milestone in further development of lifelong learning is expected to be the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework in Cyprus that seeks to enhance

mobility and permeability between the sectors and increase participation in adult education and training. This is a high priority objective and falls under the common responsibility of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) of Cyprus. The HRDA has started building a competence-based system of recognition and validation of prior learning or work experience. More specifically, in January 2014 the HRDA started with the validation of the qualifications of adult educators and trainers aiming at assuring the quality of training by certifying the trainers. From July 2014 all trainers in HRDA funded projects and programmes should be certified through a process of validating knowledge, skills and competences.

Cyprus participates in several European surveys launched by Eurostat and covering the field of adult education and training (Labour Force Survey, Continuing Vocational Training Survey, Adult Education Survey). It also participated in the first cycle of the OECD PIAAC Survey (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences). It is a member of diverse European networks (Eurydice, Refer-Net, European Basic Skills Network, etc.) and international organizations such as the Unesco (Belem Action Framework 2009–2021). Moreover, there are connections and cooperations among adult education professionals and their institutions, the Cypriot Association of Adult Education (CAEA), with European networks e.g. the European Society for Research in the Education of Adults (ESREA), the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) or the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV); the Open University of Cyprus with the University of Glasgow, University of Toronto, Malta, Tallinn and Duisburg-Essen University in working on developing a new and innovative international Master's Programme in Adult Education addressing the key concerns of the EU in the context of the Erasmus Mundus call 2014.

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## Tables and Figures

Table 1: Unemployment rate for persons age 20 to 64 (Source: Labour Force Survey)

Table 2: Enrolments of pupils/students by level of education in 2010/11 (Source: Statistics of Education)

Table 3: Research on adult education

Figure 1: Structure of the national education system 2012/13 (Source: Eurydice)

Figure 2: Distribution of revenues (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Figure 3: Legal form of adult education providers (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Figure 4: Type of the surveyed adult education providers (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Figure 5: Modes of provision (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Figure 6: Provided subject areas (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Figure 7: Modes of evaluation of learning outcomes (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Figure 8: Gender distribution in educational activities (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Figure 9: Age distribution to educational activities (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Figure 10: Participation quotes to subject areas (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Figure 11: Participation quotes to modes of provision (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)

Figure 12: Staff distribution to occupational status (Source: Project Monitoring Adult Education in Cyprus, authors' calculations)



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## Abstract

This book gives an overview of central aspects of Adult Education and Training in Cyprus in an attempt to sketch out the country's profile in the field. Based on empirical findings from a current research project, Maria Gravani and Alexandra Ioannidou present a range of data and information regarding the historical development of Adult and Continuing Education in the island, the adult education and training institutions, financing, provision, participation, staff and professionalism, quality assurance and certification processes and current research conducted in the area of higher education. The authors describe Adult Education and Training in Cyprus taking into consideration the political, geopolitical, legal and cultural context as well as the current economic situation in the island. This book offers a brief and systematic introduction and good orientation in the system of Adult Education and Training in Cyprus.